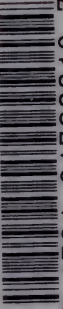
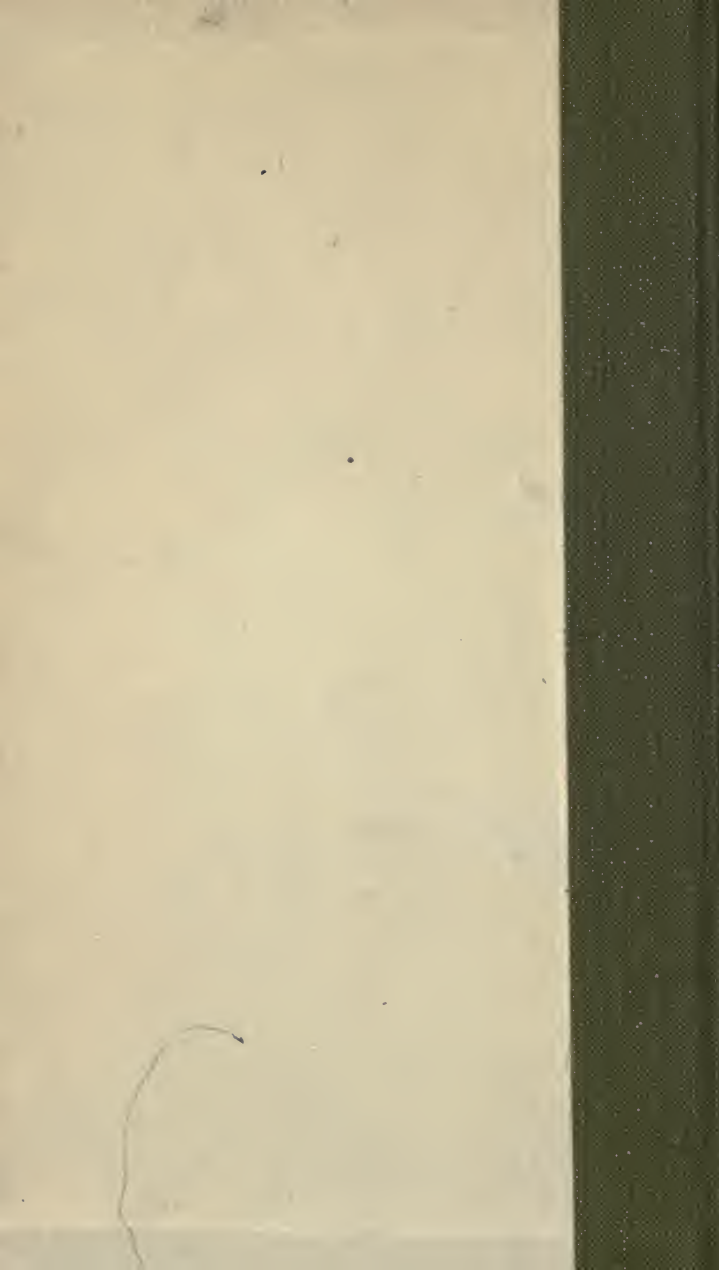


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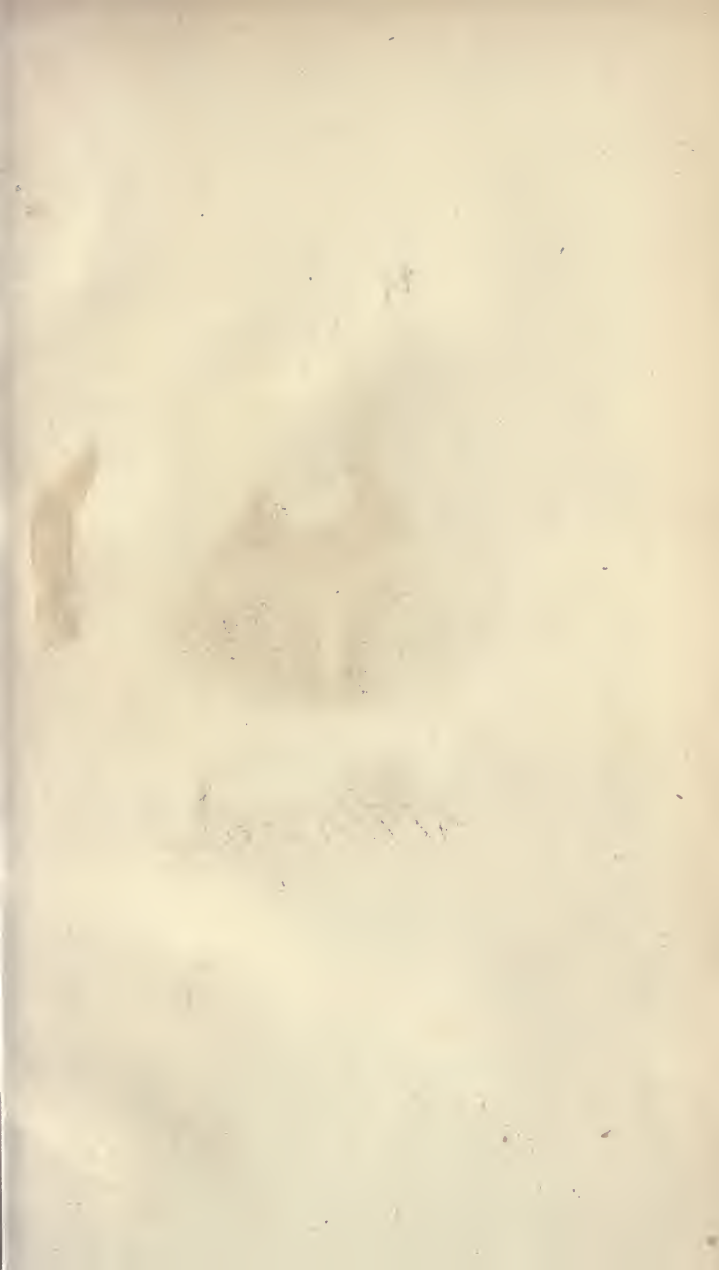


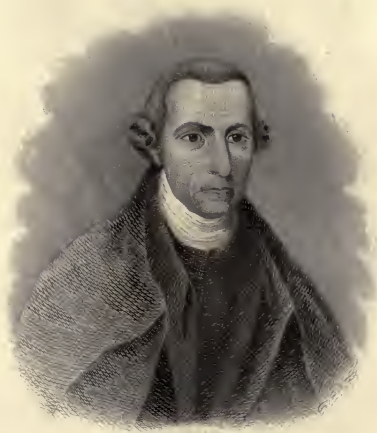
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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IN resuming the publication of this work, it needs only be premised, that it will be continued on precisely the same plan, as that adopted in the preceding volumes, and will be confined to the lives of such individuals as have been distinguished in America, particularly in that part of America which now constitutes the United States. Ten volumes have already been published; but, for the convenience of purchasers who may not possess these volumes, a new series is now commenced, and appropriate title-pages will be furnished; as also title-pages, with which the subsequent volumes may be bound in continuation of the former, or with which any separate volume may be bound when not connected with the series.





LIVES 

OF

ROBERT CAVELIER DE LA SALLE

AND

PATRICK HENRY.

BOSTON:

LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY

1864.

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MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT COURT

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XIII

LIFE  
OF  
ROBERT CAVELIER DE LA SALLE.  
BY  
JARED SPARKS.

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## PREFACE.

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AMONG the discoverers of the interior of North America, none has been more distinguished, either for the boldness of his designs or for resolution and enterprise, than the *Sieur de la Salle*. Although the period of a century and a half has elapsed since his discoveries, yet no connected account of them has been written, except the brief sketches which have appeared in the general histories of the country. The untimely and disastrous termination of his career, before he had completely attained the great objects to which he had devoted twenty years of his life, connected with the political events immediately following, may account for the neglect of his countrymen to render the tribute of justice to his name and services, which they would seem to have deserved. However this may be, these causes are no longer worthy of consideration; the events of his life form a part of our history; and his memory and deeds claim a conspicuous place among those of the early pioneers of civilization in North America.

The writers, from whom the particulars of the following narration have been drawn, are Marquette, Hennepin, Le Clercq, Tonty, Joutel, and Charlevoix.\* These authorities are entitled to various degrees of credit, and it has been a task of some difficulty to reconcile their conflicting statements, and to arrange the events in their appropriate order. Marquette preceded La Salle in the discovery of the Mississippi, and his narrative has been consulted only for a few preliminary facts.† Hennepin, Tonty, and Joutel were companions of La Salle, and profess to describe what they saw; Le Clercq and Charlevoix rely on the descriptions of others.

Hennepin's publications are so fully considered in the body of the following memoir, that it is unnecessary to speak of them in this place.

\* Marquette's *Découverte de quelques Pays et Nations de l'Amérique Septentrionale*. Paris, 1681.

Hennepin's *Description de la Louisiane*. Paris, 1684.

Le Clercq's *Etablissement de la Foy*. Paris, 1691.

Tonty's *Dernières Découvertes dans l'Amérique Septentrionale de M. de la Salle*. Paris, 1697.

Hennepin's *Nouvelle Découverte*. Utrecht, 1697.

Hennepin's *Nouveau Voyage*. Utrecht, 1698.

Joutel's *Journal Historique*. Paris, 1713.

Charlevoix's *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*. Paris, 1744.

† An account of his discoveries is contained in the *Life of Marquette*, heretofore published in this collection. See Vol. X. p. 265.

The story of his descending from the Illinois to the mouth of the Mississippi is unquestionably a fabrication.

The two volumes by Le Clercq are mainly devoted to a history of the labors of the missionaries in Canada, particularly those of the Recollects; but in the second volume he introduces an account of the discoveries of La Salle. His materials were the manuscript letters of Father Zenobe, who accompanied La Salle to the mouth of the Mississippi, and of Father Anastase, who was with him during his last voyage, and stood by his side at the time of his death. Le Clercq often transcribes the language of these manuscript letters, and thus invests his narrative with the highest authority. Viewed in this light, and as containing many incidents not mentioned by any other writer, this book may be regarded as one of the best that treats upon the subject.

The work ascribed to Tonty cannot be trusted as a record of historical facts. It was published in Paris, without his approbation or knowledge, while he was in America. There can be no reasonable doubt, that Tonty furnished notes, which became the basis of the work bearing his name; and, if we may judge of his character from the representations of his contemporaries, it would be unjust to lay to his charge the

innumerable errors with which it abounds. But these notes fell into the hands of a writer in Paris, who held a ready pen, and was endowed with a most fertile imagination; and he infused his own inventions so copiously into the text of Tonty, that the task would now be utterly hopeless of selecting the true from the false, the real from the fictitious, except so far as any particular passages may be confirmed by other authorities. There are perpetual conflicts and transpositions of dates, and blunders in geography, which could not have escaped from a writer on the spot, engaged in the scenes he describes. For instance, Tonty is made to say, that, with twenty men in canoes, he passed in three days from Niagara through the Lakes Erie, Huron, and Michigan, to the River St. Joseph. Mistakes of this sort often occur. It may be added, moreover, that Tonty himself, who lived several years after the publication of this work, declared to Iberville and Father Marest, that it was not written by him, but by a "Parisian adventurer," whose stimulating motive was money.\*

An account of La Salle's last voyage, and its disastrous results, was published twenty-six years after his death, as drawn up by Joutel, one of

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\* Charlevoix's *Hist. de la Nouv. France*, Vol. II. p. 260  
— *Biog. Univer.* Art. TONTY.



his companions. Although he wrote chiefly from recollection, yet he is allowed the merit of fidelity in relating what he saw, and internal evidence sanctions this award. The narrative of Father Anastase, contained in the second volume of *Le Clercq*, supplies many interesting particulars, which did not come under the observation of Joutel.

The principal events in the life of La Salle are related by Charlevoix in different parts of his *History of New France*. This historian had access to authentic materials, and, in the main, he was doubtless an honest chronicler; yet he possessed one foible from which greater minds have not always been free. His opinions on some subjects were tinged with the jaundiced hues of prejudice. He belonged to the order of Jesuits, and through his optics the labors and writings of such ecclesiastics, as did not come within the pale of this renowned fraternity, appeared diminutive and worthy of little notice. Now, all the missionaries, who accompanied La Salle, from the beginning to the end of his discoveries, and who wrote concerning them, were of the Franciscan order. If Charlevoix ever read their books, it was in so superficial a manner, that he derived little profit from them in the composition of his *History*. By thus avoiding to consult the only authors, except Joutel, who

wrote from personal knowledge, he has fallen into anachronisms and errors, in his sketches of the life of La Salle, which an unbiased judgment, and a research conducted upon a more liberal spirit, would have enabled him to escape.

Some important facts have been derived from original papers procured in the archives of the Marine Department at Paris. A translation of two of these papers is contained in the Appendix.



# ROBERT DE LA SALLE.

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## CHAPTER I.

*First Discovery of the Mississippi. — Robert Cavalier de la Salle. — Passes eight Years in Canada. — Obtains Letters Patent from the King. — Builds Fort Frontenac. — Obtains additional Letters Patent for making new Discoveries.*

MORE than half a century had elapsed, from the time of the first settlements in Canada, before French enterprise extended itself to the westward of the Great Lakes. At an early day the pious zeal of the missionaries had planted the cross among the Hurons, on the southern shores of the lake of that name, but it was long before the tide of civilization advanced beyond the Island of Montreal. Unceasing wars with the powerful nations of the Iroquois employed the attention and exhausted the resources of the colonial government. Led by a spirit of adventure, as well as of gain, a few traders penetrated

the interior, crossed the lakes, and brought back intelligence of the Indians, who wandered over the boundless regions of the west.

At length, in the year 1665, the resolute ardor of Father Allouez, a Jesuit missionary, prompted him to undertake the hazardous experiment of executing his mission in these remote and unknown countries. Arrived at the Falls of St. Mary, he threw himself boldly among the savages, relying on his powers of persuasion to win their confidence, and the purity of his motives to secure success. His hopes were not disappointed. He visited the tribes on the southern borders of Lake Superior, and was everywhere received with kindness. Three years afterwards, he was joined by Marquette and Dablon; and, during the five succeeding years, these courageous missionaries explored the territory between Lake Superior and the southern extremity of Lake Michigan, fulfilling their vocation as messengers of Christianity with a devotedness and self-sacrifice rarely surpassed, preaching to numerous native tribes, and subduing their wild hearts by gentleness of manners, and by inculcating the mild precepts of the Gospel. They likewise established the posts of Mackinac, St. Mary's, and Green Bay, which soon became the first rallying points of civilization on the upper lakes.

From the Indians, who came from the west, these missionaries heard of the River *Mississippi*, meaning, in the language of the aborigines, the *Great River*, a word variously written by the early French authors, according as the sound was caught by different ears from the pronunciation of the Indians. Curiosity was excited by the reports of the natives concerning the magnitude and course of this river. So large a stream must find its way to the ocean. Conjecture was awake, as to the direction it pursued and the place of its outlet. Some supposed that it disembogued itself into the Vermilion Sea, since known as the Gulf of California; others, that it poured its waters into the Gulf of Mexico; and others again, that it flowed into the Atlantic Ocean somewhere along the coast of Virginia or Florida. Such was at that time the entire ignorance of the geography of the vast regions beyond the Allegany Mountains.

The vague information collected by the missionaries was communicated to the authorities at Quebec. M. Talon, the Intendant-General of Canada, a man of intelligence, enterprise, and large designs, resolved to send a party to explore the Great River, as well for the purpose of solving an important geographical problem, as of extending the power of France in the new world by the right of prior discovery. As

leaders of the expedition he selected Father Marquette, the missionary, and M. Joliet, a citizen of Quebec. Attended by five other Frenchmen, they left the Island of Mackinac, in two bark canoes, in the month of May, 1673, ascended the Fox River from Green Bay, passed thence across the portage to the Wisconsin, proceeded down that river, and in a few days found themselves floating on the broad waters of the Mississippi. Yielding to the current of this majestic stream, and stopping occasionally to hold a peaceful intercourse with the natives on its banks, they continued their adventurous voyage to Arkansas, a distance of about eleven hundred miles from the mouth of the Wisconsin.

At this point, being convinced by the general course of the river that it flowed into the Gulf of Mexico, and having accomplished the main objects of their expedition, they resolved to return. Ascending the Mississippi to the mouth of the Illinois, they passed up that river, and thence to Green Bay, where they arrived at the end of four months from the date of their departure, having gone over a distance, in their whole route, of at least two thousand five hundred miles. Marquette's narrative of this expedition, written without pretension or parade, and with a fidelity in the description of natural objects, which, although published after his

death, confirms its genuineness and accuracy, is among the most valuable and interesting contributions to the early historical literature of America.

Owing to the premature and lamented death of Marquette, however, and to the departure of M. Talon from Canada, no results of moment seem to have issued from these discoveries. But while Marquette was wafting in his bark canoe upon the waters of the Mississippi, discovering countries and gazing at wonders hitherto unknown to the civilized world, there was a man on the banks of the St. Lawrence, whose deep thoughts were brooding over projects of peril and adventure, which he was destined at a future day to put in execution. ROBERT CAVELIER DE LA SALLE came to Canada about the year 1667. He was a native of Rouen in Normandy. Of the day of his birth no record has been preserved. It is only related, that he was of a good family, and that he spent ten or twelve of his earlier years in a seminary of the Jesuits, where he acquired an accomplished education, particularly in the mathematics and physical sciences as they were taught at that day. A career seems to have been marked out for him in the church, since he received no share in the distribution of his father's property. If such plans were formed, it would be in vain to inquire



what motives induced him to change them. When he left the seminary, however, his superiors gave him testimonials of an unblemished character, and of their approbation of his conduct during the time he had been under their charge.

The objects which first led La Salle into Canada can only be inferred from his subsequent pursuits. For several years no other aim is apparent than that of accumulating a fortune by the Indian trade, consisting chiefly in the barter of European merchandise for beaver skins and other peltries. Considering the means he possessed, however, his operations were on a large scale, and conducted with the same bold spirit of enterprise, which afterwards bore him through so many scenes of trial and danger. He pushed forward at once to the frontiers, where he erected trading-houses, and superintended in person the details of his business, freighting his bark canoes and ascending the rapids of the St. Lawrence and other rivers, thereby acquiring a practical skill in the only kind of navigation which then existed on the interior waters of America. In this art the first settlers were everywhere the pupils of the savages. In pursuing his schemes of traffic, La Salle made excursions among the Indian tribes bordering on the shores of Lake Ontario, and among the Hurons farther to the

north, gaining a knowledge of their modes of life, manners, resources, and language.

While thus employed, his thoughts were roaming far beyond the sphere of his immediate occupations. Speculative minds in Europe had long been dreaming of a shorter way to China and Japan across the North American continent. The fervid imagination of La Salle was easily kindled by these dreams. The vast extent of the Great Lakes, which was then beginning to be made known, appeared to him a confirmation of this idea, as he did not doubt, that at their western extremities would be found the heads of rivers flowing into the China Seas, or perhaps a chain of other lakes, that would render the communication easy and direct. To commemorate these anticipations he gave the name of La Chine to his trading establishment on the Island of Montreal, a name it has borne to the present day.

Although he saw glowing visions of fame and fortune in so brilliant a discovery, yet he was not so sanguine as to believe it could be effected without more means than he could then command, either by his personal influence or from his own resources. He set himself to learn a lesson of patience, and resolved to wait the favoring tide of opportunity. Meantime Courcelles, the Governor of Canada, was busy in

resisting the hostile inroads of the Iroquois. He built a fort at Sorel, and another at Chambly, and proposed to erect a third at the eastern extremity of Lake Ontario, where the St. Lawrence issues from that lake. This plan was carried out by the Count de Frontenac, his successor in the government, who called a council of Iroquois chiefs at that place, and so far prevailed over their simplicity as to gain their consent, on the grounds that this fort was to be only a depository of goods, which would facilitate the Indian trade. The fort was constructed of earth and palisades of wood in the year 1672, and called at first Fort Cataraqui, but afterwards honored with the name of its founder. The discerning eye of La Salle perceived that this post offered great advantages for the execution of his projects of traffic and discovery. He aspired to its command. He had the good fortune to win the favor of Frontenac, a man, says Charlevoix, of quick perceptions, talents, and cultivation, but of determined will, absolute temper, and deep-rooted prejudices. Fortified by the countenance of Frontenac, the aspiring adventurer repaired to France, in the year 1675, and laid his proposals before the minister. The capacious genius of Colbert then presided over the finances and marine of France. The



colonial affairs were under the control of the marine department.

Colbert had a soul to comprehend the large schemes of La Salle, and their ultimate bearing on the power of France in the new world. We are authorized to believe, also, that La Salle, during his residence of eight years in Canada, had acquired a character which commanded respect and confidence. Louis the Fourteenth acceded to the views of Colbert, and letters patent were issued, and signed by the king's hand, which granted the government and property of Fort Frontenac to the Sieur de la Salle, with the seigniory of a tract of land around it, on condition that he should rebuild the fort with stone, maintain a garrison there at his own expense, and clear up certain portions of the land. According to Hennepin, he likewise agreed to reimburse the amount which the Count de Frontenac had paid for constructing the original fort and supporting the garrison.\* Charlevoix informs us, that La Salle received from the king a patent of nobility, but in what rank or degree he was placed by this patent in the scale of titles does not appear. He was empowered, however, to hold free commerce with the natives, and to pursue his discoveries.

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\* *Description de la Louisiane*, p. 7.

After a few months' detention in France, the new lord of Cataraqui returned to Quebec, and repaired immediately to his seigniory. Applying himself diligently to his work, he faithfully performed his part of the contract. In two years' time, the palisades and embankments of the old fort were demolished, and a new one, of much larger dimensions, arose in its place, constructed of stone, with massive walls and four bastions. Trees were felled, fields planted, and the scene was enlivened by vegetable gardens, poultry-yards, and herds of cattle. A few French families had been drawn thither by such temptations as the proprietor could hold out to them; and the Recollect missionaries prevailed on some of the wandering natives to set up their cabins in the neighborhood of the fort, and to allow their children to be taught. A convenient and secure harbor lay within a small distance from the fort, opening into the lake towards the south. Not neglecting his commercial interest, on which, indeed, he depended for the resources to meet his heavy expenditures, La Salle built three small barks with decks, the first of that description which had been seen above the rapids of the St. Lawrence. With these vessels he could navigate Lake Ontario, and traffic with the savages on all its borders.

Having accomplished these undertakings with

a despatch and success, which afforded a signal proof of his ability and energy, he was now in a condition to turn his thoughts again to his great project of western discovery. After the expedition of Marquette and Joliet, he could not doubt that the Mississippi discharged itself into the Gulf of Mexico. This fact only inflamed him with the more vehement desire to complete the discovery of that river, to be the founder of colonies on its banks, and thus to open a new avenue of trade upon navigable waters between France and the vast countries of the west. Fortune and fame seemed to stand in his path, and to beckon him onward. Nor were his visions of China and Japan grown less dim or attractive. He still hoped to find a passage to those distant countries from the head waters of the Mississippi. His achievements at Fort Frontenac were only preparatory to the grand enterprise upon which he had so long set his heart. He had continued to preserve the friendship of the Count de Frontenac, who approved his designs, and proffered his influence to promote them with the court of France. Thus encouraged, the *Sieur de la Salle* made another voyage to his native country towards the end of the year 1677.

The great Colbert received him as before, and his son, the Marquis de Seignelay, who was now at the head of the marine department, was equally

forward in advancing an enterprise, which promised so much for the glory and power of France. With its successful execution these ministers saw almost the whole continent of North America within their grasp. As La Salle asked for no aid in money or supplies from the government, his requests were the more readily complied with. New letters patent were granted, and signed by the king, May 12th, 1678, confirming his rights to the fort and seigniory of Cataraqui, and bestowing additional privileges and powers.\* He was authorized to push his discoveries as far as he chose to the westward, and to build forts wherever he should think proper, on the same conditions as he had built Fort Frontenac. To meet the large expenses, which he must necessarily incur, the exclusive traffic in buffalo skins was accorded to him while the patent continued, but he was prohibited from trading with the Hurons and other Indians, who usually brought their furs to Montreal. The object of this prohibition was, doubtless, to prevent an interference with the established traders. It does not appear to have extended to the upper lakes, or to the westward of those lakes, where La Salle enjoyed the same privilege as others. Buffalo skins had but re-

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\* See a translation of the *Lettres Patentes* in the APPENDIX, No. I.

cently been brought to the Canadian market. He must have heard of the immense numbers of these animals that wandered over the western prairies, and have formed high expectations of the profits of the trade, and of its advantage to French commerce, for this was one of the arguments which he used to the ministers in soliciting his grant. He took some of the skins with him to France as a sample. The cost of transporting so bulky an article to Canada in canoes rendered it the more important to seek a communication with the sea through the waters of the Mississippi. This consideration was of little moment compared with others, which chiefly weighed upon his mind. He sought wealth apparently as the means of attaining his favorite ends. The love of adventure, the passion for exploring unknown lands, and the ambition of planting colonies and of building up a name which should rival those of the early discoverers and conquerors of the new world, these were the motives which kindled the aspirations and wrought upon the strong heart of La Salle.

Among the men of rank, who promoted his application to the French court, was the Prince de Conti. By the recommendation of this nobleman, La Salle took into his employ the Chevalier de Tonty, an Italian by birth, who had been for several years in the French army, and had lost a



hand in the service. This selection proved fortunate. Tonty was a man of capacity, courage, and resolution, and he continued true to the interests of his employer to the last, both as an officer and a friend.\* Two months after receiving his patent, the Sieur de la Salle sailed from Rochelle, accompanied by Tonty, the Sieur de la Motte, a pilot, mariners, ship-carpenters, and other workmen, in all about thirty persons. He also freighted the ship with anchors, cordage, and other materials necessary for rigging small vessels, which he designed to construct for the navigation of the lakes. To these was added a quantity of arms and merchandise. With this equipage he arrived at Quebec near the end of September. Remaining there no longer than was necessary to arrange his affairs, he hastened forward, with the whole of his company, to Fort Frontenac, having succeeded, with great labor and difficulty, in conducting his heavy-laden canoes up the dangerous rapids of the St. Lawrence.

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\* In some authors the name retains its Italian dress. *Tonti*; but I have seen an autograph written *Henry de Tonty*. He was a son of the Italian financier, who invented the *Tontine*, a method of life insurance adopted in France.

## CHAPTER II.

*Recollect Missionaries in Canada. — La Salle prepares for his Voyage of Discovery. — Builds a Vessel of sixty Tons above the Falls of Niagara. — Sails through the Lakes to Mackinac.*

FROM the date of the original settlement of Canada, the missionaries performed a distinguished part in paving the way to an intercourse with the Indians, and on many occasions in tempering the ferocity of those wild men of the forest. This work of self-sacrifice and pious zeal was at first shared between the Jesuits and Recollects, a branch of the Franciscan stock ; but at an early day the Jesuits had the address to exclude their brethren of a different order, and for nearly forty years the Canadian mission was wholly under their control. This unbrotherly act was deeply bewailed by the Recollects, as appears in the narrative of Father Le Cercq, one of their number, who unveils the secret machinations, political and theological, by which the event was brought about. During this period were published the numerous volumes of *Relations*, which consist of the annual reports of the Jesuit missionaries in Canada, containing curious incidents of their

adventures among the savages, and often matter of historical value.

But the Recollects were not doomed to perpetual lamentations. These disciples of St. Francis were restored to their privileges in 1670, and Father Gabriel de la Rabourde, with others of his fraternity, came over to Québec, and established their mission on its former basis. They were favored by the good will, if not by the direct encouragement, of the Count de Frontenac. Before the fort of palisades at Cataraqui was completed; Father Gabriel was allowed to commence his vocation at that place, and the mission continued under his direction or that of his associates. Although La Salle had received his education at the hands of the Jesuits, and had lived with them for many years, yet his predilections seem to have leaned towards the Recollects. From them he chose the spiritual guides, who were to accompany him in his discoveries. When he arrived at Fort Frontenac, he found Fathers Gabriel, Louis Hennepin, and Zenobe Membré, awaiting his orders; and also Luke Buisset and Melithon Watteau, the former destined for the missionary station at the fort, and the latter for that at Niagara. They were all natives of the Spanish Netherlands. The most renowned of these Fathers was Hennepin, who has figured in the literary world, and who will often appear in the course of this narrative.



He came to Canada in the same vessel with the Sieur de la Salle, when returning after his first voyage to France; and from that time he had been employed as a missionary at Fort Frontenac, or in rambling among the Iroquois. In some of these excursions he visited Albany, then called New Orange, and other frontier settlements of New York. Being of a restless temper, it was not his humor to remain long in the same place.

The season being now far advanced in this northern climate, La Salle made all haste to begin the preparations for his great enterprise, which he resolved to set on foot as early as possible in the following spring or summer. A vessel was to be built and equipped above the Falls of Niagara, in which he could navigate the upper lakes; and this arduous task was to be accomplished in the heart of winter, by a few men, at a distance of several hundred miles from any civilized settlement, who were to construct and guard their own habitations, surrounded by savages, who looked with no approving eye upon these strange inroads into their ancient domains.

It will be remembered that three small vessels with decks had been built at Fort Frontenac the year before. On the 18th of November, one of these vessels, a brigantine of ten tons, was despatched for Niagara, with workmen on board, and laden with provisions, and the implements and

materials necessary for shipbuilding. Tonty was at the head of this party, accompanied by La Motte and Hennepin. To screen their slender craft from the northwest winds by the protection of a lee shore, they laid their course along the northern coast of the lake, making slow progress, and running aground two or three times in attempting to sail up a river. They stopped at an Indian village near the present town of Toronto, where they procured from the natives a supply of corn. Steering thence across the upper end of the lake, they encountered head winds and bad weather, and anchored on one occasion five leagues from the land; but they had the good fortune, on the 6th of December, to furl their sails in the mouth of the Niagara River. Here they found a cluster of Indian cabins, the tenants of which were not destitute of the virtue of hospitality, for they regaled their unexpected visitors with a repast of excellent white-fish, which were caught in great abundance at that place.

The next day, a party went up the river, in a canoe, as far as the hills near the present site of Queenstown; but, the current being too rapid to permit them to ascend higher, they left their canoe, and proceeded by land around the falls to the Chippeway River, where they encamped for the night. The snow was now a foot deep. They were searching for a place above the falls

in which a vessel might be built and launched, and taken thence into Lake Erie. Returning to the mouth of the river, they found their brigantine in danger from the floating ice, and with infinite labor they brought it up to the foot of the cliffs, and dragged it ashore. This position was selected as suitable for a fort, and they began to set up palisades and cabins necessary for their immediate protection, as well against the Indians as the severity of the weather. The frozen ground, covered with snow, rendered this task tedious and difficult.

To prosecute with any hope of success the design of building a fort and a ship on the waters of the Niagara, it was essential to have the approbation and good will of the surrounding Indians. The powerful nation of the Senecas resided in the vicinity. La Motte had orders from the Sieur de la Salle to go on an embassy to this nation, hold a council with the chiefs, explain his objects, and gain their consent. Accompanied by Father Hennepin and seven men well armed, he travelled about thirty leagues through the woods, and came to the great village of the Senecas. A council-fire was kindled, around which the Indians assembled with their accustomed gravity, speeches were delivered on both sides, and the French, by a profusion of presents and a promise to establish a blacksmith at Niagara, who should repair the

Indians' guns, at last gained their point. La Motte and his companions went back well satisfied to Niagara; and here he disappears from the scene. The hardships which thronged around him in the path of new discoveries were more than he had resolution to encounter, and he returned to a life of repose in Quebec.

Tonty remained firm at his post, and on the 20th of January, the whole party, who still lingered within their encampment of palisades, were cheered by the voice of La Salle himself, who had come from Fort Frontenac in one of his small vessels, laden with provisions, merchandise, and materials for rigging the new ship, which was destined to be the first to plough the waves of the great western lakes. The clouds of misfortune, however, began already to hang over his prospects, and to cast a gloom upon the future, that might have disheartened any man of a less ardent temperament and resolute spirit. By the dissension of two pilots the brigantine was cast away on the southern shore of Lake Ontario, and it was with difficulty that the anchors and rigging were saved. Several bark canoes, with the goods and provisions on board, were wrecked and lost.

On his passage, La Salle had made a visit in person to the Seneca Indians, and he flattered himself that he had so far won their favor, that they would not embarrass his operations. It is to be

considered, that it was not the suspicious temper alone of the Indians with which he had to contend. The monopoly which he had gained from the government, the many advantages which this monopoly gave him, and the large scale upon which he conducted his affairs, raised up against him a host of enemies among the traders and merchants of Canada. These men endeavored to thwart his designs, and the easiest way of effecting this end was to stir up the jealousy of the savages, by representing that his plan of building forts and ships on their borders was intended only to command their trade, by dictating the terms and curbing their power. Agents were sent among the Indians to scatter reports of this nature, and to sow the seeds of hostility.

These artifices were well known to La Salle. He was on his guard, but was not deterred for a moment in pursuing his objects. He did not, however, press the point of constructing a permanent fort at Niagara. This was not necessary to his immediate purpose. His present aim was to push forward with all speed to the west, and he lost no time in making preparation for his voyage. The place for a dock-yard was selected about two leagues above the falls, at the outlet of a creek on the eastern side of Niagara River. Here the keel of a vessel was laid, six days after his arrival, and he drove the first bolt with his own hand.



Having made the arrangements for prosecuting the work, he hastened back to Fort Frontenac, leaving Tonty in command. His affairs required his presence at the fort, for it must be kept in mind that the expedition was to be carried on wholly at his own expense; and the funds were to be raised by his credit, and by such thrift in traffic as his skill and means would allow. Setting off with two men, he performed the journey by land, a distance of nearly three hundred miles, through the country of the Five Nations. A sack of parched corn constituted his stock of provisions. The two men and a dog dragged his baggage over the frozen snow and ice.

It should be mentioned that, some weeks previously, he had despatched fifteen men in canoes, with orders to proceed through the lakes to Mackinac and other islands in that vicinity, and thence to the Illinois country at the south end of Lake Michigan. These men were supplied with merchandise, to trade with the natives for furs and skins. It was also expected that they would collect provisions at different posts; and they were to await the arrival of the *Sieur de la Salle* with his exploring company.

Meantime the shipbuilders applied themselves with diligence to their task, under the direction of Tonty. The savages excited alarm now and then by hovering around and sometimes entering the

encampment with less ceremony than beseemed well disposed visitors. An Indian woman brought them intelligence that a plot was laid to burn the vessel while it was on the stocks. Again, the provisions on board the brigantine having been lost, a scarcity was feared, especially as the Indians would not sell their corn. Two eastern Indians, however, employed as hunters, were so successful in their calling as to furnish seasonable supplies of fresh deer and game. Notwithstanding this resource, the sufferings of the men from cold and privation, and their apprehension of savage tomahawks, betrayed them into occasional symptoms of discontent. Father Hennepin takes credit to himself for allaying their fears, and soothing their anxieties, by the exhortations which he proffered to them as supplements to his sermons.

However this may be, the work went rapidly forward, and in good time the ship was launched, to the great joy of all. The event was commemorated by the firing of three guns. The vessel was named *The Griffin*, in compliment to the Count de Frontenac, whose armorial bearings were adorned by two griffins as supporters.

The men swung their hammocks under the deck, secure in their floating fortification from the intrusion of the savages. No wonder that from this time they were cheered with more buoyant spirits and flushed with brighter hopes.



The ship was completely finished, rigged, and equipped within six months from the day on which the keel was laid. The ornamental parts were not forgotten. A griffin, with expanded wings, surmounted by an eagle, sat on the prow. Five small guns, two of brass, and three arquebuses, were the arms of defence. The burden was sixty tons. The success with which this undertaking had been carried through, in the face of so many obstacles and embarrassments, was creditable to the ability of the Chevalier de Tonty, and to his skill in command. Hitherto the current of the river above the falls had been untried, and the navigators of the Griffin did not venture to trust their sails in making this new experiment. The vessel was cautiously towed along the shore, and moored in safety within three miles of Lake Erie.

During this period, the *Sieur de la Salle* remained at Fort Frontenac, attending to his commercial and other affairs. It required no small degree of vigilance to counteract the manoeuvres of his enemies, who were bent on defeating all his plans. They spread reports that he was about to engage in a most hazardous adventure, the expenses of which were enormous, and from which there could be little hope of his ever returning, and that his visionary schemes and unyielding temper would ruin himself and all

concerned with him. These rumors alarmed his creditors in Montreal and Quebec, who seized upon his effects there, and sold them at a great loss to their owner. There was no remedy for these vexations ; the delay in rectifying them would effect the very object at which the instigators aimed ; and he submitted to them with patience ; although his property of Fort Frontenac and the lands around it, which he must necessarily leave behind him, was in value more than double the amount of all his debts.

Before leaving Fort Frontenac, he performed an act of generosity to the Recollects, who were about to depart with him, by making a perpetual grant to their order. He had already built houses and a chapel for their accommodation, and he now, by a legal instrument, drawn up and attested by his notary, La Metairie, gave to the order of Recollects eighteen acres of land on the margin of the lake near the fort, and a hundred acres more of forest land.

Hearing that his ship was ready, he hastened to Niagara, skirting along the southern shore of Lake Ontario in a canoe, and stopping by the way to cement his friendship with the Iroquois by new presents and promises. Arriving at the ship, he was rejoiced to find all preparations in forwardness, and the men in good spirits. The wind not being strong enough for a few days to

encourage the attempt to surmount the rapids at the head of the Niagara River, the time was employed in grubbing up the soil and planting seeds. At length, advantage being taken of a favorable wind, with the aid of twelve men pulling by a rope on the shore, the ship escaped all danger, and floated triumphantly on the waters of Lake Erie. The brass cannon, the arquebuses, and a volley of firearms, attested the joy which this occasion inspired; the forests resounded with the acclamations of the men; and the Indians gazed with mute astonishment at so novel a scene.

The company now assembled on the deck of the Griffin amounted in all to thirty-four. The three missionaries, the venerable Father Ribourde, the erratic Hennepin, and the amiable Zenobe, were at their posts. A small party was left at Niagara under the spiritual charge of Father Melithon Watteau. The Chevalier de Tonty had been sent forward some time before, with five men in canoes, instructed to proceed to Mackinac, and look after the fifteen men, whom La Salle had despatched thither in the autumn preceding for purposes of trade.

On the 7th of August, 1679, the sails of the Griffin were spread to the winds of Lake Erie, and our adventurers committed their destiny to the great waters. Confiding in the strength of

their vessel, and the skill of the mariners, they sailed fearlessly into the lake, and shaped their course by the compass. The voyage was prosperous. On the third day were descried the islands at the mouth of the strait leading to Lake Huron. In sailing up this strait, hitherto not explored except with canoes, more caution was necessary, but they ran safely through it in thirteen days. The small lake, which they crossed in their way, they called St. Claire, in honor of the saint whose name appears in the calendar for the day on which they entered it. By frequent soundings and other precautions, they passed without accident over the shallow waters of the strait near its northern extremity, till their sails at last caught the breezes of Lake Huron.

Standing thus on an open sea, they felt more secure, and with good heart turned the prow towards the port of their destination. With the usual vicissitudes of head-winds and calms, they advanced slowly, but without danger, till a terrible tempest arose, which filled the boldest mariners with dismay. Hennepin tells us that even the resolute soul of La Salle quailed before the horrors that surrounded him. Joining with the others in fervent prayers to St. Anthony of Padua, he made a vow, that, if he should be delivered out of these perils, the first chapel erected in his newly-discovered countries should be dedicated

to that great saint.\* The pilot was the only man among them, whose devotions were not quickened by these appalling scenes. He poured out his complaints upon La Salle, as the author of these calamities, and bewailed the sad fate, by which, after the glory he had gained in braving the storms and rage of the ocean in every clime, he was now doomed to perish in a fresh-water lake. Happily the winds abated, the billows ceased to roll, and, on the 27th of August, a favoring breeze wafted the Griffin into a placid bay in the Island of Mackinac.

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### CHAPTER III.

*Sails to an Island at the Entrance of Green Bay. — Proceeds on his Voyage in Canoes along the Western Shore of Lake Michigan. — Disasters of the Voyage. — Meets a Party of Indians, who threaten Hostilities. — Arrives at the Miamis River.*

It was the first purpose of our voyagers to make a favorable impression upon the Indians,

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\* Hennepin's *Description de la Louisiane*, p. 58. *Le Clercq's Etablissement de la Foy*, p. 148.



whose friendship was essential to their success. These sons of the forest looked with wonder at the ship, the first they had ever seen, which they called the *great wooden canoe* ; and their astonishment was increased when they went on board, and heard the roar of the cannon. The Sieur de la Salle, clothed in a scarlet cloak edged with gold, and attended by some of his men well dressed and armed, made a visit of ceremony to the head-men of the village, where he was received and entertained with much civility, and where the missionaries celebrated mass.

On the opposite shore of the strait, which separates Mackinac from Michigan, was a settlement of Hurons, which Father Marquette had gathered at that place several years before. Their habitations stood on an eminence, and were surrounded by palisades. They had already made such progress in civilization, that they understood the use of firearms, which they had procured from the French traders, and they saluted the commander of the great canoe with three rounds from all their guns. This show of civility, however, was more politic than sincere, for their friendly dispositions were no further manifested.

In fact, La Salle soon discovered that the zeal of his enemies in Canada had been exceedingly active against him during the summer, and that they had taken pains, by their emissaries, to poison

the minds of the Indians and traders in all that region. They had represented him as having a design, not only to monopolize the trade in furs and skins, but to invade and subdue the natives. Reports of this nature occasioned suspicion, and put them on their guard. These machinations operated to his disadvantage in another quarter. The fifteen men, whom he had sent forward to barter and collect provisions, had been tampered with and seduced from their duty. Instead of going to the Illinois, as they were ordered, they had wasted the time at Mackinac, and on the islands and coasts in the neighborhood. Some had deserted, and others had squandered a part of the merchandise with which they were furnished for traffic. Tonty, who reached Mackinac in a canoe some time before the vessel arrived, had been unable to find them all, or to satisfy the disaffected at that place.

These disappointments were discouraging, but they could not be remedied, and the season was too far advanced to admit of delay. It was known that some of the deserters had gone to the Falls of St. Mary, and others to the Indian villages in that direction on the western shores of Lake Huron. These men were important to the success of the expedition, and Tonty was sent with a small party in canoes to search for them, and prevail on them to return to the service.



Moreover, a few of them, it was believed, were true to their engagements, and were detained in carrying on their trade with the natives.

Meantime the sails of the Griffin were again spread to the wind. Passing through the strait between Mackinac and the main land on the opposite side, the explorers entered the broad expanse of Lake Michigan, and, coasting along its northern borders, after a prosperous voyage of somewhat more than a hundred miles, they cast anchor in a small island at the mouth of Green Bay. This island was inhabited by Pottawatimies, being a portion of a tribe of Indians of that name residing in the Wisconsin territory. And here the Sieur de la Salle had the good luck to meet with several of his men, who had been diligent in collecting furs, and had laid up a large quantity in store.

With these furs, and others that might be procured at Mackinac, and at the different posts on the passage, he resolved to freight his ship, and send her back to Niagara, for the purpose of making a remittance to his creditors. This was apparently a sudden resolution, and not satisfactory to his people, who must thenceforth pursue their route in canoes, exposed to numerous hardships and dangers; and in the end it proved extremely unfortunate. But he seldom asked counsel of any person, and was not easily di-

verted from an object upon which he had set his mind. Besides, he doubtless thought that his men could not reasonably complain of hardships, which he was to share in the same measure as all the others. Within two weeks after their arrival at the island, the vessel sailed, having on board the pilot and five mariners bound for Niagara. The pilot was ordered to come back as soon as possible, and pursue his voyage to the mouth of the Miamis River, at the southeastern extremity of Lake Michigan.

The company now remaining consisted of fourteen persons. These were to be transported along the west side of Lake Michigan in four bark canoes, which were likewise laden with a blacksmith's forge, carpenters' tools, utensils of various kinds, merchandise, and arms. A small stock of provisions only was laid in, because it was expected that supplies would be obtained on the way from the Indians; and by the hunters whenever they landed. In all his travels, La Salle seems to have been accompanied by a faithful Indian from some of the eastern tribes, who served him in the double capacity of footman and hunter, being exceedingly expert in the use of his gun and in searching for game, and on whose skill and activity he and his companions often depended for subsistence.

All the preparations being made, they took

their departure from the island on the 19th of September. Nightfall came on before they reached the nearest point of the continent, which was twelve miles distant. Darkness thickened, the waves rose, and the water dashed into the canoes; but they contrived to keep together, and to find a landing-place in the morning. Here they were detained four days in a barren spot, till the lake became calm. A single porcupine was the only trophy that rewarded the hunter's fatiguing rambles, which Father Hennepin says afforded a savory relish to their pumpkins and corn. Trusting their fragile canoes again to the waves, they were soon overtaken by new disasters. Clouds gathered over them, the winds blew angrily, and, deluged with rain and sleet, they were glad to seek safety on a naked rock for two days, with no other shelter than their blankets. At the end of another day, they were in so great danger in attempting to land, that the *Sieur de la Salle* leaped into the water with his men, and assisted them to drag his canoe ashore. His example was followed by those in the other canoes. They landed somewhere in the neighborhood of the River *Milwaukie*.

By this time the provisions were exhausted, but they had seen Indians, and presumed their habitations were near. Three men were sent, with the calumet of peace, to search for corn.

They came to a deserted village, where they found abundance of corn, of which they took as much as they wanted, and left such articles as the natives valued in exchange. Before night the Indians hovered suspiciously around the party at the canoes; but, when the calumet of peace was presented, they showed themselves friends, and entertained their visitors with dances and songs. They were so well satisfied with the goods left in the village, that the next day they brought more corn and a supply of deer, for which they were amply rewarded.

This proof of human sympathy, even from men called savages, was a sunbeam in the path of the weary voyagers. Their troubles, however, were not at an end. Launching their canoes again upon the water, they were doomed to wage the same hard conflict with the angry elements; at times dragging their canoes upon the rocks to escape the fury of the waves, and at other times pulling them ashore through the foaming surf, with the spray beating over their heads. Such were the perils to which they were exposed, and the sufferings they endured, almost without cessation, till they reached the end of the lake, and turned their course eastward. Here the waters were more tranquil, and on the land they could regale themselves with the flesh of deer and wild turkeys, which fell an easy prey to the hunters.

Grape vines hung in graceful festoons from the tall forest trees, loaded with clusters of ripe fruit, which was gathered by cutting down the trees. At length, to enjoy a little repose, they went ashore on a small peninsula, and drew their canoes upon the beach.

The footprints of men had been seen near this place, which indicated that Indians were not far off. At present La Salle had no desire to make their acquaintance. He gave express orders that every one should keep quiet, and be on his guard. But one of the men, seeing a bear in a tree, could not resist so tempting an opportunity to try his gun, and he shot the bear dead, and dragged him in triumph to the camp. These animals climbed the trees to feast on the grapes. La Salle was vexed at this piece of indiscretion in the man, and, to avoid surprise, placed a sentinel near the canoes, which had been turned bottom upwards to screen the goods under them from the rain.

The noise of the gun was heard by the savages, who proved to be a roving party of Outtagamies, or Fox Indians, from Green Bay, apparently on a hunting excursion. In the night several of them crept silently by the camp, and came to the canoes, where they succeeded in stealing a coat and some other articles before they were discovered. The alarm was given, and the French-



men flew to their arms. The Indians then cried out that they were friends, and that, hearing the gun, they suspected a party of Iroquois to be in the neighborhood, who, being enemies, could only design to kill them. To ascertain whether their suspicions were correct, they said, was the occasion of their coming so near the camp; and since they found themselves among Frenchmen from Canada, whom they regarded as brethren, they had no disposition to be obtrusive, but, on the contrary, should be well pleased to smoke the calumet of peace. Not caring to embroil himself unnecessarily, the Sieur de la Salle allowed them to depart, telling them that he would receive a visit from four of their number, but no more. Accordingly four old men came to him, smoked their pipes, and proffered friendship.

Not long after they were gone, the theft was detected, which placed matters upon another footing. If such an affront were suffered to pass unnoticed, a repetition of it might be expected, with other insults. La Salle was determined to have satisfaction. He went out with some of his men, and seized two of the Indians, who were strolling in the woods, and brought them back prisoners. One of these he sent to the chiefs with a message, that, unless the stolen goods were restored, the life of the prisoner remaining in his hands should be the forfeit. This message

threw the Indian encampment into a state of great perplexity, for the coat and other articles had been cut into many pieces, and distributed to different individuals, so that the demand could not be complied with. It was finally decided, as the only resort, that they would rescue the prisoner by force. They marched to the attack, but the movement was discovered in time to enable the Frenchmen to advance to an eminence near the sandy plain, which separated the peninsula from the main land, and to take such a position as the savages were not eager to assail. For a brief space these demonstrations seemed ominous of a conflict; but, the Indians being evidently reluctant to make the assault, and their opponents having nothing to gain by it, there was not much difficulty in coming to a parley, which led to a settlement of the dispute without bloodshed or blows. Father Hennepin, as usual, plumes himself upon this happy issue of events, ascribing it to his valor and presence of mind in going boldly among the Indians, in the face of their war-clubs and tomahawks, and presenting himself as a mediator and peace-maker. He had seen battles and sieges in Flanders, and was not now to be intimidated by the parade of Indian warfare.

The Sieur de la Salle agreed to admit a depu-



tation of two persons, and promised their safety. Two old men made their appearance, and said that the robbery was disapproved, and that the goods would have been restored if it had been possible; but, since it was not so, the only thing that could now be done was to return such as were not injured, and pay for the rest. So reasonable a proposition could not be refused. The treaty was, moreover, confirmed by a rich present of beaver skin robes. The cessation of hostilities on these terms was mutually gratifying to the parties. The event was celebrated by feasts, dancing, and speeches, and the Indian orators called up all their rhetoric to adorn and enforce their expressions of attachment to their new friends.

Harmony being thus restored, the canoes were again put afloat, and, without further adventures, the whole party entered, on the 1st of November, the mouth of the Miamis River, since called the St. Joseph.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Builds a Fort. — Joined by the Chevalier de Tonty.  
— Loss of the Griffin. — The Sieur de la Salle  
and the whole Party go down the Kankakee  
River to the Illinois. — Arrive at a deserted  
Indian Village. — Descend the River to Lake  
Peoria. — Land at a large Settlement of Illinois  
Indians at the South End of the Lake.*

THE Miamis River had been appointed as the rendezvous of the ship, and of the Chevalier de Tonty, who was expected to bring with him about twenty men. La Salle was disappointed not to find this party already arrived, since their route from Mackinac was along the east side of the lake, which was much shorter than that on the west, over which he had passed. His anxieties were also increased by the murmurs of his men. The provisions were all consumed, except such as could be obtained by the chase; and they urged him not to stop here, but to make haste to the Illinois country, where corn might be procured from the natives. They said the winter was fast approaching, and the rivers would soon be closed with ice, and, if they were detained in this desolate spot, there would be the greatest danger of perishing by famine, or of being cut off by hostile Indians.

This counsel did not accord with the views of the commander. He told them that it would be hazardous to go with so small a number among the Illinois, who were a great nation, and on whose dispositions they could not rely, and that it would be more safe to wait for the expected reinforcement, by which they would be enabled to make a better appearance, and stand a better chance of gaining the respect and friendship of the natives. In the mean time, he hoped to fall in with some straggling party of that nation, and to conciliate their favor by presents and kind treatment, and, perhaps, to learn something of their language. He added, moreover, that, if he were deserted and abandoned by them all, he should remain at that place with his Indian hunter and the missionaries.

The men seemed very much dissatisfied with this determination ; but they yielded, and agreed to obey his directions. To divert their thoughts, and employ them in a manner that might prove useful to his designs, he resolved to build a fort. At the junction of the river with the lake, there was a hill of considerable elevation, and of a triangular form, bounded on two sides by the water, and on the other by a deep ravine. The top was level and covered with trees. This position was chosen for the fort. The trees were cut down; and the bushes cleared away, so as to leave the

ground open to the distance of two musket shots on the side towards the ravine. Logs were then cut and hewn, so that they could be laid compactly one upon another, and with these timbers a breastwork was raised on four sides, enclosing a space eighty feet long and forty broad, which, for greater security, was to be surrounded by palisades. The structure was called Fort Miamis.

While this work was going on, the precaution was taken to sound the river at its entrance, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the water was deep enough to admit the Griffin. The main channel was thus discovered, and long stakes were driven down on each side of it, with bear skins attached to them, as signals for the pilot. Two men were likewise sent back by the shortest route to Mackinac, with instructions to the captain, urging him to sail up the lake as soon as possible, and informing him of the signals by which he would be enabled to bring the vessel immediately into the river.

These occupations kept all hands busy during the month of November. The discontent of the men, however, did not cease, although they were submissive to the orders of the commander. To sustain them under their fatigues and hard labor, they had no other food than the flesh of bears, which the Indian hunter killed in the woods. They became satiated and disgusted with this

coarse fare, and desired to go out and hunt for deer and game. This permission was not granted, because it was evident that they were more bent on desertion than on improving their diet.

At last the Chevalier de Tonty appeared, with two canoes well stocked with deer, which had been recently killed. This seasonable supply and accession of numbers cheered the spirits of the whole company. Tonty had left some of his men two or three days' journey behind, who were expected to follow, but whom he could not divert from their amusement of shooting stags and gathering acorns, in both of which the forests abounded. Perceiving that his commander was uneasy at this apparent negligence, and was apprehensive that the men would desert, he hastened to repair the fault by going back after them. On the passage, a violent wind upset his canoe, and drove it ashore ; but he proceeded by land, found the men, and brought them all to the fort, except two, who had verified the suspicions of the commander by running away.

Tonty was the bearer of the unwelcome intelligence that the Griffin had not been at Mackinac, and that nothing had been heard of her since she sailed from the island of the Pottawotimies, although inquiries had been made of the natives inhabiting the coasts in those parts. This intelligence weighed heavily upon the mind of the



Sieur de la Salle, who had already begun to have anxious forebodings of the fate of his vessel. Judging from her first voyage, she might reasonably be expected to arrive at the Miamis River in forty-five days from the time she left the island, and seventy days had now elapsed. In the sequel, it turned out that she was lost; no news of her ever came to light; and she was probably swallowed up by the waves of Lake Michigan while on her passage from the island to Mackinac. There was a report that she was plundered and burned by the Indians, but of the accuracy of this report no credible proof was ever produced.

Having waited as long as prudence would admit, La Salle resolved to go forward. Ice had formed in the river, but it was dissolved by a favorable change of the weather. On the 3d of December, the whole party, consisting of thirty-three persons, took their departure from the fort in eight canoes, and ascended to the portage.\*

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\* This is according to the statement of Hennepin, but Le Clercq says that four men were left at the fort. No other account mentions this fact, and it is not probable that so small a number would have been left there, exposed to the attacks of roving savages. There seems no good reason for questioning the accuracy of this part of Hennepin's narrative. Forty-two years afterwards, Charlevoix travelled over the same route, and his description of natural objects, the courses of rivers, and distances, agrees very closely with



The distance was about seventy miles. Although a canoe had before gone up the river to search for the portage, yet its exact position had not been ascertained. The Sieur de la Salle landed to explore the country alone, and was gone so long that his companions began to be alarmed for his safety. While he was wandering at some distance from the river, hoping to discover the sources of the eastern branch of the Illinois, he fell upon marshy grounds covered with thick bushes, which compelled him to take a large circuit, and darkness overtook him on his way. He fired his gun, but the signal was not answered. By good luck, however, he espied a light not far off, which he approached, and found near the fire a bed of leaves, upon which a man had just been reposing, probably an Indian, who, startled at the sound of the gun, had made a precipitate escape. Weary with the fatigues of the day, and chilled by the falling snow, La Salle at once came to the resolution of appropriating these comfortable quarters to himself for the night. Cutting down the bushes, and so arranging them around his little encampment that no one could approach without making a noise that would arouse him

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Hennepin's. At the time of Charlevoix's visit, there was a French fort and garrison a few miles below the portage. The river was then called the St. Joseph.

from his slumbers in time for defence, he threw himself upon the couch of leaves, and slept undisturbed till morning. In the afternoon he rejoined his companions, who were overjoyed at his safe return. Two opossums were hanging from his belt, which he had killed with a club while suspended by their tails from the branches of trees.

Two days had passed away in an unsuccessful search for the portage. At last the faithful Indian hunter, who had been out to look for deer, came in and told them where it was, and that they had gone too far up the river. By his aid the place was found, and the canoes and all their contents were carried over a distance of five or six miles to the head-waters of the Kankakee.\* The precaution had been taken to leave letters hanging from branches of trees in conspicuous places, both at the fort and the portage, containing instructions for the captain of the Griffin, in case he should arrive. For nearly a hundred miles from its source, the Kankakee winds through marshes, which afford growth to little else than tall rushes and alders. A more desolate scene in the midst of winter could hardly be imagined. As one comfort to our travellers,

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\* The present name of the eastern branch of the Illinois River. This word is a corruption of the Indian name *Theakiki*, which the French called *Kiakiki*.

however the frozen ground enabled them to go on shore at night, build fires, and take their repose. Emerging from the marshes, they entered a vast prairie, where the stream became broader, and nature put on a more cheering aspect. They now began to be straitened for provisions, and were disappointed in the supplies they had expected from the chase. At this season, the buffaloes had migrated to a more genial clime, and for several days the hunters succeeded in killing only two deer, as many wild turkeys, and a few swans. In this extremity, Father Hennepin says, Providence came to their relief. A stray buffalo was found sticking fast in a marsh. Thus disabled, he fell an easy victim to the prowess of the hunters, and this fortunate supply revived the flagging spirits and failing strength of the whole party.

At length the canoes floated on the waters of the Illinois, after a voyage of three hundred miles, by the windings of the Kankakee, from the portage. This river is considerably larger than the one in which it loses its name at the place of their junction. Charlevoix says he has seen a buffalo wade across the western branch at the fork, whereas the Kankakee is deep and broad, and, as he calls it, a beautiful river.

The current of the Illinois soon conducted the voyagers to a large Indian village, situate on the

right bank of the river, not far below the present town of Ottawa. Not a human being was seen in the whole village, though it contained between four and five hundred cabins, many of them well built, and covered with mats of rushes. The inhabitants, according to their custom, had separated, and gone away to the hunting grounds, where they were to pass the winter, this being the proper season for the chase and for taking furs. Great quantities of corn were found carefully buried in dry places, a temptation too seductive for men who had subsisted for months on the flesh of wild animals alone. The *Sieur de la Salle* knew the hazard he should run by appropriating to his use a portion of this corn, and the vengeance which such an act might bring upon him from its owners; but the call of necessity was more imperious than that of danger, and he caused about fifty bushels of it to be carried to the canoes, trusting in his good fortune to appease and satisfy the savages, when he should meet them, by presents and a fair recompense.

Embarking again on the river, they descended four days without any incidents worthy of note, till the 1st of January, 1680, the morning of which day was commemorated by mutual salutations, by religious services from the missionaries, and by such other ceremonies as were suited to bid a welcome to the opening of a new year

And here we should remark, that La Salle had all along been told by the savages he had seen on his way from Mackinac, that the Illinois Indians were unfriendly to the French, and that he was running a fearful risk to venture himself among them. The thievish Outtagamies, who crossed his path near the Miamis River, had repeated the same tale. Those rumors lingered in the busy thoughts of the men, and the commander himself was not entirely free from apprehension. At any rate, as he must soon expect to meet with the natives, he deemed it prudent to be on his guard, and prepared for any tide of events that might rise.

On the first day of the year, after the ceremonies of the morning, they passed through a lake, about twenty miles long and three broad, then called Pimiteouy, but since known as Lake Peoria; and, just as they had entered the river at the lower end of the lake, an Indian encampment suddenly broke upon their view, planted on both sides of the stream. The men were immediately summoned to arms; the canoes were ranged in a line, with La Salle on the right and Tonty on the left; and in this attitude the little flotilla boldly advanced to the shore. The Indians were amazed at this apparition; some of the more resolute seized their arms; others took to flight; and in a moment the whole camp was a scene of confusion.



The Sieur de la Salle landed first, and he was followed by his men. It was not his interest nor his purpose to seek hostilities, but he well knew that to betray symptoms of timidity was not the way to secure the respect or conciliate the favor of the savages. He stood on his defence, allowing the Indians time to recover from their consternation, and awaiting the issue. He did not present his calumet, because this might be construed as an evidence of weakness, rather than of a voluntary offer of peace on equal terms. The Indians gazed for a while, and seemed to expect a conflict; but, perceiving no movement on the part of their visitors, they finally held up three calumets of peace, and the signal was immediately answered by the French. From that moment all suspicions and fears ceased; they invited the Frenchmen to their cabins, and received them as friends; the women and others who had fled were called back; and the day was passed with festivity and joy.

La Salle took the first opportunity to explain to them the objects, that had brought him to their country, which he could do with the more facility as he was accompanied by two interpreters. He told them that he had come from Canada to impart to them a knowledge of the true God, to assist them against their enemies,



and to supply them with arms and with the conveniences of life. At this interview he said nothing about his proposed voyage to the Mississippi. In fact, his aim seems only to have been to quell their apprehensions and rivet their friendship. The idea of teaching them the Christian religion, and at the same time putting firearms in their hands to excite their passion for war, is so incongruous, that this report might be doubted, if it were not confirmed by two of the missionaries who were present, and who relate the circumstance without comment. He explained to them, what he had done in regard to the corn, which, he said, was an act of necessity; and he offered to pay its full value in such commodities as they might choose from his stores. This proposal was readily accepted, and he then distributed presents among them, with which they expressed entire satisfaction, and all the links in the chain of friendship were understood by both parties to be closed.

This good understanding, however, was soon interrupted. During the night of the same day, a chief of the Mascoutens, a tribe inhabiting near the Fox River, came secretly into the camp of the Illinois. His name was Monso, and he was accompanied by several Miamies, who brought with them presents of knives, hatchets, kettles, and other valuable articles. Monso as-

sembled the head-men of the village in the night, and told them he had come to warn them against the insidious designs of La Salle, representing him to be in a league with the Iroquois, and as coming only in advance of an army from that formidable nation, with which he would unite his forces in an attack on the Illinois; and added that this intelligence was communicated to him by some of La Salle's own countrymen, at whose suggestion he had undertaken this mission, out of the love he bore to his friends. Having thus poisoned the minds of these people, and distributed the presents, he went off the same night, to avoid being seen by the French, although he was, doubtless, himself the dupe of his employers, believing the tale they instructed him to tell.

In the morning, when the Sieur de la Salle went into the camp, he was surprised at seeing the apparent distrust and coldness of those, who the day before had treated him with so much frankness and cordiality. He was puzzled to conjecture the cause. Applying to one of the chiefs, from whom he had received marked tokens of friendship, and pressing him to explain the reason of these strange appearances, he finally drew from him the whole story of Monso's intrigues. Knowing now on what ground he stood, it was his next endeavor to

counteract these mischievous counsels, by proving the falsehood of the report, and showing the evil designs of its authors. He managed the affair with so much dexterity, that he succeeded in recovering their friendship, though, perhaps, not in eradicating every germ of suspicion.

In the mean time, he made inquiries about the Mississippi, and talked of his plan of building a boat to sail down that river. That all jealousies were not put at rest is evident from a circumstance which occurred soon afterwards. Nikanape, a man of rank in the camp, and brother to the great chief of the nation, who was absent on a hunting excursion, invited the Frenchmen to an entertainment, and, before sitting down to the repast, he made a long speech, the drift of which was, to advise his guests against their perilous scheme of going down the Mississippi. He said that others had perished in the attempt ; that the banks were inhabited by a strong and terrible race of men, who killed every body that came among them ; that the waters swarmed with crocodiles, serpents, and frightful monsters ; and that, even if the boat was large and strong enough to escape these dangers, it would be dashed in pieces by the falls and rapids, or meet with inevitable destruction in a hideous whirlpool at the river's mouth, where the river itself was swallowed up and lost. This harangue,

which the orator enforced by expressions of anxious concern for the welfare of his friends, produced an obvious effect on the minds of La Salle's men, even when repeated in the less ornate and forcible language of the interpreter. He perceived it in their countenances, and therefore framed his answer in a manner both to allay their fears, and show the savage that he saw more deeply into his motives than he imagined.

He said the dangers, which had been painted in such glowing colors, bore on their face so clear a stamp of exaggeration and improbability, that he was convinced Nikanape himself would excuse him for regarding them with utter incredulity; and even if they were as formidable as had been represented, the courage of Frenchmen would only be the more eager to encounter them, as crowning their enterprise with the greater glory. As to the concern, which his host had expressed for their welfare, he would not doubt its sincerity, but he believed there was something at the bottom of his heart, which his sense of propriety on this occasion did not permit to escape through his words. He felt constrained to say that he saw the seeds of jealousy lurking under the cover of this fair speech, which touched him the more sensibly, as his own conduct had been frank, steady,

and confiding. If there were causes of uneasiness, let them not be concealed under the garb of suspicion, but let them be brought out to open day, where they might be explained and removed. He was surprised that they should listen to such idle and malicious reports as Monso had scattered in their ears, creeping into the camp as he did at midnight, and skulking away in darkness before he could be confronted by those whom he had accused.

This tone of firmness and reproof was taken in good part by Nikanape, and he was too skilful a host to allow the harmony of his feast to be interrupted by dissensions of his own making. These events, however, were not such as to give peace or repose to the mind of La Salle. The imaginations of his men were inflamed by Nikanape's terrific account of the Mississippi. Six of them deserted, including the two sawyers, whose services were exceedingly important, preferring a long journey in search of some friendly tribes near the Michigan, to the labors and dangers before them. Some accounts say that these men had laid a plot to poison their commander and his principal adherents. The defection of so large a number was not only discouraging in itself, but a sad breach in the company. La Salle told those who remained, that, in the spring, if any of



them should be afraid to venture upon the Mississippi, he would give them a canoe to return to Canada, but that it was the extreme of folly and imprudence to go off in the depth of winter, exposed to perish by cold and hunger, or perhaps by the hands of the savages. He was aware that the readiest method of soothing their discontent was to find them employment, and he laid a scheme for building a fort. He consulted his men on the subject, represented their exposed situation among the natives, and their greater security in some fortified place. They acquiesced in his views, and promised cheerfully to undertake the work.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Fort Crèvecoeur built near Lake Peoria. — Inter-  
course with the Indians. — Hennepin ascends  
the Mississippi. — La Salle returns by Land  
to Fort Frontenac. — Some of the Men desert.  
— Iroquois War. — Tonty and Father Zenobe  
endeavor to mediate between the Iroquois and  
Illinois.*

THE place selected for the fort was about half a league below the Indian camp, and not



far from the present town of Peoria. The position was strong by nature, situate on a high bank rising from the margin of the river, and bounded on two sides by ravines running nearly at right angles to the stream. The task of preparing it for defence was not a hard one, since it consisted mainly in connecting the two ravines by a breastwork of timbers and palisades, and in digging away some parts of the other three sides, to render the ascent more steep and difficult. About the middle of January, the whole company removed to this spot, and established their quarters within the lines of the fort. In sympathy with his feelings, La Salle named it Fort Crève-cœur, *Broken Heart*, as a memorial of the sadness he felt at the loss of his vessel, which he now deemed almost certain, and at the numerous discouragements and disasters which had hitherto attended his enterprise.

With his suspicious neighbors at the camp he lived on good terms. They gave him no annoyance, and visits were sometimes interchanged. Father Zenobe took up his residence there, was adopted into the family of a noted chief, made some progress in learning the language of the natives, and exercised among them, as well as he could, his missionary calling; but he confessed that their rude manners and mode

of living were as much as his philosophy and Christian patience could bear. The good Father Gabriel remained at the fort, where he erected a chapel; and Hennepin rambled as his fancies moved him.

While one party was busily employed upon the fort, another was engaged in preparing timbers and planks for building a bark, or brigantine, forty-two feet long and twelve broad, with which it was intended to prosecute the discoveries on the Mississippi. The two sawyers had run away; but, after a little practice, two other men succeeded very well in supplying their place. Trees were burnt into charcoal, the smith went to work with his forge and hammers, and all hands moved with such alacrity and diligence, that in six weeks' time the fort was completed, and the vessel's hull stood on the stocks nearly ready for her masts and rigging. Planks were provided for a parapet around the deck, to ward off the arrows and other missiles, with which the natives might assail them from the banks of the river. The men were encouraged, also, by certain savages coming from the south, who confuted Nikanape's stories about the terrible monsters in the river, and who said it was easily navigated, and nowhere obstructed either by falls or rapids.

It was obvious, however, that with the present

means it was impossible to finish the brigantine. Cordage, more iron, and other materials for the rigging, were wanted. All these articles had been put on board the Griffin; but La Salle despaired of ever again seeing this ship, after the report brought to him by Tonty, and since he had not heard from the two men whom he sent to Mackinac. With these disheartening prospects staring him in the face, he came to the hardy resolution of going back himself to Fort Frontenac, procuring the necessary supplies, and returning with them as soon as possible to Fort Crèvecoeur.

That the intermediate time might not be lost to his grand objects, he planned an expedition of discovery to the sources of the Mississippi. Above the mouth of the Wisconsin, where Father Marquette's voyage began, that river had not been explored by any European. It is probable that the dreams of China and Japan, which he had cherished so fondly, still lingered in his imagination, and that he hoped to solve a problem of so much interest to the commercial world. This fatiguing and hazardous enterprise was intrusted to Father Hennepin, whose restless spirit, courage, and experience of Indian life and manners, well fitted him, in many respects, for so bold an adventure. On the 29th of February, 1680, he departed from Fort Crève-

cœur in a canoe, accompanied by two Frenchmen, named Picard du Gay and Michel Ako, and pursued his course down the Illinois River. He was liberally supplied, as he says, with goods to exchange with the savages for provisions, and to conciliate them by presents, and with such other conveniences for his voyage as could be spared.\*

La Salle was prepared for his departure, and two days afterwards began his journey, with three Frenchmen and his Indian hunter. The Chevalier de Tonty was left in command of the fort, having now under him about sixteen men, besides the two missionaries. We may easily imagine the nature of La Salle's undertaking, when we reflect that he was to travel over land, and on foot, through vast forests to Fort Frontenac, a distance of at least twelve hundred

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\* Charlevoix speaks of *M. Dacan* as being at the head of this expedition. No such personage is mentioned by Hennepin, nor does the name appear on any other occasion. Charlevoix may have followed the pretended narrative of Tonty, which is too much garbled and disfigured by other hands to merit confidence in a fact of this nature, unless supported by better testimony. And the author of the *Mémoire sur la Louisiane*, ascribed to the Count de Vergennes, may have followed them both, for he likewise speaks of M. Dacan; I say *ascribed* to the Count de Vergennes, for I am persuaded the Memoir was not written by him. See APPENDIX, No. II.

miles by the route he was to take along the southern shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, and that innumerable rivers were to be forded, and others crossed on rafts; and all this at a season of the year when the melting snows and floating ice rendered the travelling to the last degree fatiguing, and the rivers dangerous; depending wholly on the chase to supply provisions for five men, and on their courage and address to protect themselves from the wandering savages. Nothing seemed formidable, however, to his strong heart and unbending resolution. Shouldering his knapsack and musket, he bade adieu to his companions, and set his face towards Canada.

Following an Indian path near the bank of the river, he arrived on the 11th of March at the great village where he had found the corn. Some of the natives had already returned from their camp and hunting grounds to their summer residence in this place, and among them the pious and persevering Father Zenobe, who hoped to tame their wild spirits and win them to a better life by his well-timed instruction and the persuasive eloquence of his example. Not far from this village La Salle discovered a spot, with which he was charmed, as affording an admirable position for a fort. It was a high, rocky eminence, rising abruptly from the river,



and so steep as to be ascended with great difficulty, except on one side, and level at the top. He sent a message to Tonty, requesting him to come up with some of his men, and erect a fortification on this rock during his absence. The work was afterwards executed, and occupied as a strong hold by the French for several years. It was called Fort St. Louis.

La Salle stayed but twenty-four hours at the village, and the next day, at some distance up the river, he met the two men who had gone by his orders from the Miamis River to Mackinac. They could give no account of the Griffin. He told them to join their comrades at Fort Crèvecœur, and then hastened forward on his journey.

As soon as the Chevalier de Tonty received the orders of his commander, he repaired immediately, with some of his men, to the place designed for the new fort, and began to mark out the lines and prepare for the work. In a short time, however, news came that the men at Fort Crèvecœur were in a state of insubordination, and that his presence was required there as soon as possible. When he arrived, it was ascertained that the two men lately returned from Mackinac, who had doubtless been tampered with by La Salle's enemies during their absence, had stirred up some of the others to revolt.



More than half of the whole party had deserted, carrying with them such arms, goods, and provisions, as they could take away. Two of them, while ascending the river in a canoe with Father Gabriel to join the Chevalier de Tonty, contrived to injure the muskets of the Sieur de Boisrondet and another person, not in the conspiracy, so that they would not take fire, and then made their escape. The deserters appointed their place of rendezvous at Fort Miamis, where they demolished the fort, and plundered whatsoever they could find, and then went to Mackinac, and seized the furs and peltries, which had been left in deposit by La Salle as a part of the Griffin's cargo.

Tonty, being destitute of succors and of the means of providing them even for the small remnant of his party now remaining, retired to the great village of the Illinois, and took up his quarters among the natives, intending to wait there for the return of La Salle with a reinforcement and supplies. He had the good fortune to gain the favor and confidence of the Indians, and spent the summer in attempting to teach them the use of firearms and military manœuvres, which at least served to amuse and keep them in good humor. When an alarm was raised by a rumor that a combined attack was about to be made by the Miamies and Iroquois,

he prevailed on them to build a little fort, and surround it with intrenchments; for it seems, that, although numerous, they were not a war-like people, it being their custom, whenever an enemy approached with a large force, to desert their habitations, wander to the westward, and join their allies, sometimes across the Mississippi.

In the mean time, the missionaries applied themselves with zeal to the labors of their calling. Father Gabriel was adopted into the family of a chief, where he was treated in all respects as one of their own number. Zenobe made such progress in acquiring the language, as enabled him to converse in it with tolerable ease. He visited other Illinois villages, and even the Miamies, among whom Marquette had resided for some time five or six years before. But in his narrative Father Zenobe speaks despondingly of the prospect of communicating to these savages the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, or of producing any change in their manners. He represents them as addicted to gross vices, passionate, thievish, indolent, superstitious, and as yielding but a very slight obedience to their chiefs. Some of them were docile, and listened attentively to the instructions of the missionaries; but the good Fathers could not satisfy themselves that they had made the least

impression. One of the principal converts, a man of note among them, being attacked by some disease, put himself under the discipline of the conjurers, in whose hands he died, thus showing the little confidence he possessed in his new faith.

At all events, neither Tonty nor any of his party had reason to complain of a want of hospitality or kind treatment in these untutored Illinois, during their residence of six months in the great village. At length, in the early part of September, an Indian belonging to a friendly tribe came to the village, and reported that he had discovered an army of Iroquois and Miamies, to the number of four or five hundred men, who had already advanced into the territory of the Illinois. This intelligence, so unexpected, produced the greatest consternation. A few persons were deputed to reconnoitre, who soon came back and confirmed the report, adding that La Salle himself was in the enemy's camp, whom they recognized by his hat and European dress. A loud clamor was immediately raised against the French, who were accused of being deceivers and traitors, and the rabble cried out that those in the village ought to be put to death without a moment's delay.

It required all the presence of mind and firmness, which the Chevalier de Tonty could com-

mand, to appease this tempest of rage, and avert the blow. He used such arguments as he could in his defence, and, to prove his sincerity, offered to join the Illinois with his companions in an attack on the enemy. It turned out that the man taken for La Salle was an Iroquois chief, who had adorned his person with a hat and Canadian jacket.

It was unfortunate that at this time a large number of the young Illinois warriors was absent, but, as no time was to be lost, those in the village, accompanied by the Frenchmen, marched out to meet the enemy. They put on an air of courage at first, and skirmished with an advanced party; but Tonty soon discovered that his allies would not be able to stand their ground against so large a force. As a last hope, therefore, he proposed to go to the Iroquois as a mediator, and endeavor to bring about a reconciliation and peace, to which they assented, and gave him the powers of a negotiator. Attended by Father Zenobe, and laying aside his arms, he approached the camp of the Iroquois with a calumet in his hand, and called out for a parley. The Iroquois themselves had begun to waver a little, as to the probable issue of a battle, for they had expected to come upon the Illinois by surprise in their village, whereas these had been enabled to rally their warriors

and prepare for defence. Nor could the Iroquois judge of the numbers of the opposing army.

In this state of uncertainty, some of the leaders were willing to hear what could be said in favor of peace. Tonty and Zenobe were admitted into the camp ; but the young men, not approving any terms of peace, surrounded the mediators, and, with violent gestures and language, seemed on the point of putting them to instant death. A young warrior thrust a knife at Tonty, which would have pierced him to the heart, if it had not been turned aside by one of his ribs. The wound bled profusely. At this moment, a chief rushed forward, who, perceiving that his ears were not bored, cried out that he was a Frenchman, and must not be killed, and endeavored to stop the blood by applying a belt of wampum as a bandage to the wound.

At the same time, another warrior seized Tonty's hat, and, placing it upon the end of his musket, ran towards the Illinois, who inferred from this signal that their messengers of peace had been murdered, and, enraged at such perfidy, they were about to renew the conflict with all their might, and wreak their vengeance on so faithless a foe. They were undeceived, however, in time to prevent this rash step. The Iroquois accepted the calumet, promised



peace, and made a show of retiring; but, having discovered that the Illinois were not so strong as they had supposed, they soon appeared again near the village.

Father Zenobe now consented to go alone among them, and inquire the reason of their return. They received him with civility and kindness, and told him that they did not intend to violate the treaty or do any harm, but they were hungry, and must have food. The Illinois, taking this in good part, supplied them with such provisions as they wanted, and proposed to open a trade with them for furs and skins. For two or three days, there was a sort of intercourse between the two parties on the footing of friendship, and Father Zenobe and one of his Illinois friends slept very quietly one night in the Iroquois camp. It was soon apparent, nevertheless, that all these pretensions were hollow and treacherous. The Iroquois prowled about the village, committed depredations, and took such liberties as proved that they were only seeking a quarrel under the garb of peace.

The Illinois themselves had not been free from suspicion, and they prepared for the worst. The old men, women, and children, had retired to the interior of the country, and the inhabitants of the other villages were advised to retreat, and

leave nothing behind for the enemy to plunder. The warriors began to disperse one after another, and Tonty was left with Fathers Gabriel and Zenobe, Boisrondet, and two other Frenchmen, without hope of support or aid from any quarter. Considering the part he had acted, he must necessarily be looked upon as an enemy by the Iroquois, and in this delicate situation he had but one course to pursue. He and his five companions betook themselves to an old and leaky canoe, and, on the 18th of September, departed from the great village of the Illinois, without provisions or supplies of any kind, and made the best speed they could up the river.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Tonty escapes with his Party to Green Bay.— Father Gabriel murdered by the Savages.— La Salle arrives at Fort Frontenac.— State of his Affairs.— Prepares for another Expedition.— Returns to the Illinois Country, and spends the Winter there.— Meets Tonty and his Party at Mackinac.*

THE next day, when they were about twenty-four miles from the village, the canoe ran upon

a rock, and it was dragged ashore for repairs. While this was doing, the pleasant scenery and open woodlands tempted Father Gabriel de la Ribourde to walk on the bank of the river. He stayed away so long, that his companions became uneasy, and as soon as the canoe was finished, they all went to search for him, calling, firing their guns, and looking in every direction till dark. They had seen paths recently trodden by human footsteps, and it was deemed prudent for safety to cross the river, and pass the night on the other side, since there were reasons for apprehending that the Iroquois might pursue them, with a design to waylay and cut them off.

At the dawn of day the next morning, they crossed the river again to the same place, and renewed their search, which was continued till three o'clock in the afternoon, when, nothing having been seen or heard of the venerable missionary, they entered the canoe with heavy hearts, and moved slowly along near the shore, looking anxiously at every opening in the wood and jutting point of land, with the hope that he might have strolled up the river farther than he was aware at the time, and had waited their arrival. They never saw him more. Delay would have subjected the whole party to the greatest danger, as it was evident that Indians

had recently been at the place, and it could not be doubted that they would all be killed if they were overtaken by the Iroquois.

As events proved, it would have been useless to remain longer. The tragical end of Father Gabriel was not known till some time afterwards, when the particulars were related by the Indians. It happened that, just before this time, the Kickapoos, a tribe inhabiting the central parts of the Wisconsin territory, had sent out a party of warriors to fight the Iroquois, of whose advance westward they had heard. This party was encamped not far from the place where Tonty landed, and on that day three young warriors from the camp were scouting near the river. They accidentally met Father Gabriel in his walk, and killed him, in cold blood, with a war-club, although they knew he was not an Iroquois. It was an act of savage barbarity and deliberate murder. They took off his scalp, and carried it away as a trophy, seizing likewise his Breviary and Prayer Book, which afterwards fell into the hands of a Jesuit missionary.

Thus perished a man whose character is extolled by all the writers that mention his death. In Europe, he had held responsible offices in the church, and he was for some time at the head of the Recollect mission in Canada; eminent for his virtues, piety, and those rare qualities

which bear up the spirit with equanimity and cheerfulness under the heaviest trials. Charlevoix says he died at the advanced age of seventy-one. He had been ten years in America ardently devoted to the cause to which he had consecrated his life, spending his days and nights in the cabins of savages, domesticating himself in their families, submitting without a murmur to the hardships he endured, and waiting patiently for the blessing of Heaven to convert the fruit of his toils to the spiritual well-being of these benighted children of nature.

Indeed, there are few examples in the history of mankind more worthy of admiration and profound respect, than those of the Catholic missionaries in Canada. With a singleness of heart, a self-sacrifice, and constancy of purpose, to which a parallel can scarcely be found, casting behind them the comforts of civilized life, deprived of the solaces of society and the sympathy of friends, and surrounded by dangers and discouragements on every side, they exhausted their energies in a work for which they could not hope for any other reward than the consciousness of having done a great duty, approved in the sight of God, as designed to enlighten the moral and mental darkness of a degraded race of human beings. Some of them were murdered, some were cruelly tortured, but



these appalling barbarities did not shake the constancy of others, nor deter them from closing up the ranks thus fearfully broken. We need not look to the end, nor inquire for the results ; motives are the test of merit ; and humanity can claim no higher honor, than that such examples have existed.\*

Having despaired of meeting their venerable friend, the voyagers pursued their course up the river with dejected spirits, and much distressed by the want of food. The water broke into their shattered canoe so fast, that they were obliged to leave it behind, and perform the journey by land, a distance of more than two hundred miles, to the nearest village of the Pottawatimies, subsisting on ground nuts, wild garlic, and such roots as chance threw in their

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\* A spirited sketch of the labors and sufferings of the early missionaries in Canada may be seen in the third volume of Bancroft's *History of the United States*.

Hennepin, in the closing chapters of his *Nouvelle Découverte*, has narrated the incidents of Father Gabriel's death, and the preceding events of the Iroquois war. His facts are drawn from the letters of Father Zenobe, or from the abstract published by Le Clercq, with such embellishments as are always ready at the call of his prolific imagination. He censures Tonty, apparently without justice, for having deserted Father Gabriel ; but Zenobe, who was present, passes no such censure, though he endeavored to prevail on Tonty to remain some time longer.

way. The snow began to fall, and the ice to form. Their lacerated feet were poorly protected by moccasins made of Father Gabriel's mantle of skins. Without a compass or path to guide them through the woods, they wandered up and down at random, and advanced slowly towards their journey's end; nor was it till after fifteen days' march that their hunger was appeased by the flesh of a deer, which they had the good fortune to kill.

The Sieur de Boisrondet lost himself in the forests, and for ten days his companions supposed him to be dead. He had a musket, but neither balls nor flint. Necessity spurred his invention, and he contrived to melt a pewter dish into balls, and to fire his gun by the touch of a live coal. In this way he shot wild turkeys, upon which he subsisted.

They finally all reached the village of the Pottawatimies, borne down with fatigue and exhaustion. They were kindly received, and entertained with a generous hospitality. These Indians had traded with the French, and regarded them as friends. The principal chief addressed them in a flattering speech. He was accustomed to say that he knew of but three great captains in the world, Frontenac, La Salle, and himself. Tonty had dragged his emaciated frame with difficulty to the village, where he

was taken dangerously ill, and was obliged to remain till his recovery. Father Zenobe went forward to the missionary station at Green Bay. At this place they all assembled in the spring, and proceeded to Mackinac, where they intended to wait till they should hear from their commander.

Let us now return to the *Sieur de la Salle*. No record has been preserved of the incidents of his long and perilous journey through the wilderness from the Illinois to the St. Lawrence. He arrived safely at Fort Frontenac, where he found his affairs in a state of deplorable confusion. The Griffin, with her cargo, valued at twelve thousand dollars, had been lost; his agents had despoiled him of the profits of the trade, in which he had several boats and canoes embarked in Lake Ontario; a vessel charged with merchandise for him to a large amount had been cast away in the Bay of St. Lawrence; his canoes, heavily laden, had been dashed in pieces while ascending the rapids above Montreal; some of his men, seduced by the wicked machinations of his enemies, had stolen his goods, and run away with them to the Dutch in New York; and, to crown all, his creditors, taking advantage of a rumor, maliciously circulated, that he and his whole party were drowned on their voyage up the lakes, had seized upon

his remaining effects, and wasted them by forced sales. In short, being deserted by fortune, all Canada seemed to conspire against his enterprise.

A less resolute heart would have shrunk back from such obstacles, and abandoned an object apparently so hopeless and unattainable ; but despair was never known to settle upon the mind of La Salle. He had one friend left, the Count de Frontenac, whose influence and authority were exerted in his favor. The plan of navigating the Mississippi in a boat with rigging and sails was given up, and he resolved to prosecute his discoveries with canoes.

Having engaged more men, and among them La Forest as an officer, and such an arrangement of his affairs being made as circumstances would permit, he departed from Fort Frontenac on the 23d of July, 1680. Head winds detained him more than a month in Lake Ontario, and he did not reach Mackinac till the middle of September. Three weeks were here consumed in a vain attempt to traffic for Indian corn, which neither money nor goods would purchase. It was known that he had brandy ; and when this was offered, the trade became so brisk, that sixty sacks of corn were brought to him in a single day. With this supply he embarked for Lake Michigan, and near the end of November

the canoes were moored in the mouth of the Miamis River.

We have already seen that the fort erected at this place the year before had been plundered and thrown down by the deserters from Fort Crèvecoeur. A few men were left here, but La Salle pursued his journey without delay to the Illinois, where he was surprised to find the great village burnt and desolate; for he had heard nothing of the Iroquois war, or of the disasters that had befallen Tonty and his party. The hill upon which he had ordered a fort to be built stood bare and lonely, without any vestiges of human labor at its top; a proof that the Frenchmen had either been killed or dispersed. This aspect of things seems to have discouraged him from going down the river, till he could gain further intelligence. He returned to the Miamis River, and spent the winter in visiting the Indian tribes near Lake Michigan.

At a village of the Outtagamies he met with some of the vagrant Illinois, who told him the story of the war, and of the calamities their nation had suffered; but they could give no account of the Frenchmen. He was informed that nearly all the inhabitants of seventeen Illinois villages had crossed the Mississippi, and sought safety among the Osages. In the late



incursion, the Miamies had sided with the Iroquois, and it was the effort of La Salle to break the bond of this connection, and to unite in an alliance all the neighboring tribes in that region against so formidable an enemy, who had no good will for any of them, whose policy was to divide and conquer, and who, by sowing dissensions among them, designed only to subdue them all in detail, and then to plunder and destroy their towns. He sent a message likewise to the Illinois, advising them to commit no hostilities against the Miamies, but to join in this league of peace and self-defence. All parties listened with apparent acquiescence to his counsels ; and, whatever may have been the result, it was evidently the most politic scheme he could adopt, for his future operations would be obstructed, perhaps defeated, by hostilities between the tribes through which he must pass.

It being impossible to execute his plan with the small force now under his command, it was necessary again to seek new recruits and resources in Canada. Towards the end of May, 1681, he left the Miamis River, and, after a prosperous voyage, entered the harbor of Mackinac about the middle of June. We need not describe the joy that was mutually felt, when Tonty and his companions here met their commander. They recounted to each other the

strange events, disasters, and dangers, that had thronged around them since their separation; and La Salle, in particular, set before them, in melancholy array, the dark catalogue of misfortunes and disappointments, which had assailed him at every step; yet, says Father Zenobe, with all the calmness and indifference of a man who relates only ordinary occurrences, and with the same tone of firmness and self-reliance, of hope and confidence in the future, that he had expressed at the beginning of his enterprise. The experience, which he had so dearly bought, seemed only to impart a new impulse to his resolution and ardor.

As there was no occasion for delay at this place, they all embarked in a few days for Fort Frontenac

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## CHAPTER VII.

*Hennepin's Voyage up the Mississippi.—His pretended Discovery of the Mouth of that River.—Grounds for disbelieving his Account.—Sources whence he drew his Materials.*

WE will now interrupt the thread of our narrative to say a word of Father Hennepin, whom

we left with his two Frenchmen, Picard du Gay and Michel Ako, in a canoe at Fort Crèvecoeur, departing on a voyage of discovery. His instructions from the Sieur de la Salle were, that he should ascend the Mississippi, and explore the sources of that river.

On the seventh day, he found himself at the mouth of the Illinois, and, after waiting a short time for the Mississippi to become clear of floating ice, he turned his course northward. No incident worthy of remark is related till the 11th of April, when he was somewhere in the vicinity of the Wisconsin, probably above the mouth of that river. Here he was surprised by the sudden appearance of a large body of natives, in thirty-three canoes, who came fiercely down upon him, and took him and his two men prisoners. They were treated rudely at first, and some of their goods were seized; but the calumet was smoked the next day, and from that time they appear to have met with as good usage as the savages were accustomed to bestow upon uninvited guests. They all returned up the river, and in nineteen days the grand cataract opened upon their sight, now seen for the first time by European eyes, and named by Hennepin, in honor of his patron saint, the *Falls of St. Anthony*. Proceeding thence by land about one hundred and eighty

miles up the River St. Francis, which was likewise named by him in honor of the patron saint of his order, they came to the villages inhabited by these Indians, whom he calls the Issati and Nadouessioux, since known as the Sioux.

Many adventures are related as having happened during his residence with these wild tribes, showing their manners and habits of life. He speaks of himself and his comrades as being in captivity, but he does not inform us wherein their liberty was restrained. He was permitted to be absent for several weeks with one of his men, on a voyage down the river to the Wisconsin, and Picard was allowed to retain his sword, pistols, and powder. There is no evidence that they could not have gone away when they pleased, at least after the first few days of their captivity; no complaint that they were deprived of food or raiment, or compelled to endure greater hardships than the Indians themselves. They remained in the villages, and in wandering with the savâges, about three months, when they were agreeably surprised by meeting a party of five Frenchmen, under the command of the Sieur du Luth, who had come into the country by the way of Lake Superior. Luth was a man of courage and enterprise, who had penetrated

these remote regions for the purpose rather of trade than of discovery. He prevailed on Hennepin, Picard, and Ako, to go with him to the villages, where they all stayed till near the end of September, 1680; and then they set off together on their return to Canada, being nine persons in company.

Descending the Mississippi to the Wisconsin they took the route, that was then well known, up the Wisconsin and down the Fox River to Green Bay, and arrived at Mackinac in the early part of November, about eight months from the date of Hennepin's départure from Fort Crèvecœur. If they had arrived a few weeks earlier, they would have met the Sieur de la Salle at Mackinac, on his way to the Illinois country. Hennepin went to Quebec, and sailed for France, where he published, three or four years afterwards, an account of his travels and discoveries, under the title of a *Description of Louisiana*.\*

Such is the substance of his narrative, as contained in this first work. It is singularly deficient

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\* This work was written and printed some time before its publication. The license is dated September 10th, 1682; the printing was completed January 5th, 1683; and, in his preface to the *Nouvelle Découverte*, he says it was published in 1684, though some copies bear the date of the year preceding.



in geographical facts, though it abounds with curious incidents and descriptions, somewhat confusedly put together. His discoveries were limited to the space on the Mississippi and St. Francis between the Wisconsin and the Issati villages, for Marquette had passed over his track below the Wisconsin. This was all he pretended to have done in his first narrative, and his map of the Mississippi extends no farther down than the mouth of the Illinois.

Although it was evident, from the book itself, that the author was endowed with a lively imagination, and entertained exalted ideas of the great things he had accomplished, yet, as he had really shown himself a man of courage and persevering resolution, the world seemed disposed to allow him credit for sincerity and general accuracy, except in his estimate of the Falls of Niagara, which he represents to be six hundred feet high. And, after all, this might be an error of judgment, for he does not pretend to have measured the height, although he passed a winter within the sound of the cataract.

Thirteen years after the first appearance of this work, and ten years after the death of La Salle, he published another at Utrecht and Amsterdam, with the pompous title of a "New Discovery of a Vast Country situated in America, between New Mexico and the Frozen Ocean."

In this publication is embodied the whole of the former, written anew and much enlarged. This might well be done from the author's notes and recollections. But the most remarkable addition is that, in which he pretends to have descended to the mouth of the Mississippi, and to have been the first discoverer of that river, giving the particulars of the voyage, as to dates, distances, the names of Indian tribes, and natural scenery, which, it was supposed, could not be known except from actual experience and observation. Men were astonished at this new revelation, after the secret had been locked up for seventeen years in the bosom of a man, who had never before been suspected of hiding his light under a bushel, or of veiling his achievements from the public eye.

In his first narrative, he says, "We had some design of descending to the mouth of the River Colbert, which probably discharges itself rather into the Gulf of Mexico than into the Vermilion Sea; but the nations who took us prisoners would not allow us time to navigate this river both up and down." \* After this gratuitous declaration, it is no wonder that his readers should have been

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\* *Description de la Louisiane*, p. 218. At the time of La Salle's discovery, the Mississippi was called *Colbert* by the French, after the great minister; and the name of *Seignelay*, his son, was given to the Illinois.

surprised at his detailed account of a voyage, which he had said he could not perform. Nor was this surprise lessened by further examination. The voyage is interpolated into the original narrative, and the time assigned for it is so short as to astound the faith of the most credulous. He takes but forty-one days to descend from the Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico and to return, a distance, up and down, of two thousand seven hundred miles, and this in a canoe paddled by two men; whereas the trading boats on the Mississippi, with oars and sails, were considered long afterwards as having made an expeditious voyage in ascending from New Orleans to St. Louis in seventy days.\* According to his own statement, the average distance passed over by his canoe, from the time he left the Illinois River till he returned to it, must have been at least sixty-five miles a day.†

The suspicions of the author's veracity, which

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\* Stoddard's Louisiana, p. 18.

† Moreover there is a conflict of dates, which defies every attempt at a reconciliation. He sets out from the Gulf of Mexico on the 1st of April, is at the Arkansas River on the 9th, and at the Illinois on the 24th; but in his first account he represents himself as having been captured by the Issati Indians near the Wisconsin on the 11th of the same month, and, in his second account, on the 12th. To have altered this last date essentially would have marred all that followed, but, as it stands, it equally unsettles all that preceded.

could not but spring from these circumstances, were strengthened by others. In the preface to his *New Discovery*, he affirmed that he lived in America eleven years, whereas the whole time of his residence there was less than five years. He also declares that Joliet assured him that he had never been further west than the Hurons and Ottaways, who dwelt in the neighborhood of Green Bay;\* but he had before written that Joliet descended the Mississippi as far as the Illinois.† In the preface to his third work, he says, in round terms, that he was “the first European who discovered the course of the Mississippi;” and again he repeats, “I was the first European who navigated that river,”‡ although he had learned from Joliet himself the particulars of his voyage to the Arkansas, performed seven years before the river was seen by Hennepin, and the interesting narrative of that voyage by Marquette had been a long time published. Nor was it possible that these assertions should be mere slips of the pen or of memory. The motive for making them was obvious, and could by no means redound to the author’s credit or honor.

He assigns reasons, however, for withholding

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\* *Nouvelle Découverte*, Chap. XL.

† *Description de la Louisiane*, p. 13.

‡ *Nouveau Voyage*, Chap. Iil.

his secret so long, and for not divulging it during the lifetime of the Sieur de la Salle, whom he represents as so eager for the glory of discovering the mouth of the Mississippi, that his anger would never cease to burn, if it were known to him that he had been anticipated by one of his own party, in violation of his orders. He tells us, also, that La Salle was his enemy. In adducing proofs, he goes far back, and relates a circumstance which happened while they were crossing the Atlantic together from France to Canada. A joyous company of girls on board sought to wear away the tediousness of the voyage, and enliven the spirits of the passengers, by the amusement of dancing. This was more than the grave and scrupulous Recollect could endure, and he took occasion to reprimand the young damsels, and check their hilarity. La Salle interposed, and said there was no harm in dancing, and that the missionary had overstepped the bounds of his authority. Warm words ensued, and we are called upon to believe that, by this frivolous incident, a root of bitterness was planted in his bosom, which was never eradicated.\*

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\* This story is told in the preface to the *New Discovery*. A small part only of this curious preface is printed in the English translation. Indeed, the English version of the whole book is wretched, both in the matter and style. The *Nouvelle Découverte*, and *Nouveau Voyage*, are both con-



Again he recurs to a conversation between him and La Salle at Fort Frontenac concerning the Mines of St. Barbe in Mexico, of which the latter expressed a hope of some day gaining possession. The patriotic Recollect talked coldly of such a scheme, because he was a good subject of the King of Spain. By this indication of loyalty, according to his representation, the heart of his commander was turned against him.

In addition to tales like these, we have an insinuation that he had been exposed to unnecessary dangers. What can be more absurd than these trivial pretences? Deception is stamped on the face of them. By his own choice, La Salle had retained him at Fort Frontenac, invited him to take part in the expedition, and confided to him the enterprise to the Upper Mississippi. These acts are not proofs of enmity, but of friendship and confidence. Yet such are the reasons given, if reasons they can be called, for so long keeping out of sight this boasted discovery.

The blame for a disobedience of orders he threw upon his two men, Picard du Gay and Ako. He describes as follows the state of his mind and his resolutions when he was delib-

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tained in the *Recueil de Voyages au Nord*, (Vols. V. IX.,) but the prefaces and dedications are omitted, and also more than three chapters at the end of the *Nouveau Voyage*.

erating what course to take at the mouth of the Illinois River.

“I am now determined to make known to the whole world the mystery of this discovery, which I have hitherto concealed, that I might not give vexation to the *Sieur de la Salle*, who was ambitious to secure to himself alone the glory and the knowledge of it. For this reason, he sacrificed many persons, whom he exposed to dangers to prevent them from publishing what they had seen, and thereby crossing his secret designs. I was fully persuaded that, if I went down the Mississippi, he would traduce me to my superiors, because I did not pursue the route to the north, which I ought to have done in obedience to his directions, and according to the plan we had agreed upon together. But, on the other hand, I saw myself about to perish with hunger, and knew not what to do, as the two men who accompanied me threatened openly to go off in the night, and take with them the canoe and all its contents, if I refused to descend the river to the nations inhabiting its banks below. Surrounded by these embarrassments, I could hesitate no longer, and I thought it my duty to prefer my own safety to the violent passion, which the *Sieur de la Salle* had conceived of enjoying alone the glory of this discovery. The two men, seeing me resolved to follow them,

promised entire fidelity. After we had shaken hands as a mutual pledge, we embarked on our voyage." \*

By this statement he would have it believed that the voyage was accidental on his part, and that he was compelled to undertake it against his will, by the obstinacy of his two men; and no other motive is assigned than that of procuring food to keep them from starving. Was not this end to be answered just as well by going up the river as down? When they afterwards ascended the river above the Illinois, we hear no complaint of a want of provisions. In fact, the whole paragraph is anything but a fair and ingenuous explanation of his conduct. He might well have had some qualms of conscience in the matter, for, besides a violation of trust and disobedience of orders, the canoe was laden with merchandise which belonged to La Salle, designed for conciliating the Indians by presents, and for procuring necessary supplies.†

It has been asked where Hennepin found

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\* *Nouvelle Découverte*, Chap. XXXVII.

† It is singular that Charlevoix should represent Hennepin's voyage down the Mississippi to have taken place *after* he had been at the Falls of St. Anthony. (*Hist. de la Nouv. France*, Chap. X.) It shows with how little attention the historian perused the volumes of the ambitious Recollect. The Jesuits, to whose body Charlevoix belonged, were more fortunate in his hands.

materials for his account of a voyage which never existed except in his imagination. Some have supposed that he drew them from the book ascribed to Tonty, which appeared at the beginning of the year in which the *New Discovery* was published, and might therefore have been in the hands of the author early enough for such a use. For the descriptions of natural scenery, as far as the Arkansas River, he might have helped himself from Marquette. It is true enough that the agreement with Tonty, in many parts, is too close to have been the result of accident, and it is remarkable that the Recollect and his two men should encounter so many events, which happened precisely in the same manner, and at the same places, two years afterwards, to the Sieur de la Salle and his party; and these events of a kind which would never be likely to happen but once anywhere. But there is no occasion to pursue this inquiry, for the problem can be solved by a more direct and certain process.

Le Clercq's account of the missionary proceedings in Canada was published in 1691, six years before Hennepin's revelation of his new discovery. The work contains a pretty full narrative of La Salle's voyage down the Mississippi, which the author professes to compile from the letters of Father Zenobe, and for the most part in his own words. Zenobe was in the

expedition, and described it in letters to the Bishop of Quebec, of which Le Clercq procured copies. Now, whoever will make the comparison will find that Hennepin has not only taken the frame-work of his narrative from Le Clercq, but has appropriated whole paragraphs, with very slight verbal alterations, contenting himself with changing the dates to suit the occasion. It is possible that he may have had access to a copy of Zenobe's letters on this subject, as he speaks, in another part of his work, of having seen his previous letters describing the Iroquois war and Tonty's adventures; but, if we admit this possibility, it does not alter the nature of the case, nor weaken the charge of piracy and fabrication. These facts, added to others, are perfectly conclusive, and must convict Father Hennepin of having palmed upon the world a pretended discovery and a fictitious narrative. It is no other than a description of the voyage of La Salle, vamped up in a new and deceptive dress, and adorned by such intervening incidents as a fertile invention could easily supply.\*

Notwithstanding this gross imposition, we must allow him justice on other points. There seems

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\* Parallel passages from Le Clercq and Hennepin, bearing out the above statement, may be seen in the APPENDIX, No. III. Le Clercq's two volumes are very rare. The circulation of the work is said to have been suppressed by



no good reason to doubt the general accuracy of his first book, nor of his second, previously to his departure from Fort Crèvecoeur. Where his personal ambition and glory are not concerned, he may probably be relied on; but, unfortunately, these too often obtrude themselves upon the reader's notice. He was one of that restless and aspiring class of men, who are unhappy at the thought of another's fame or success, looking upon themselves as entitled to a monopoly of these distinctions. Jealous of rivals, and distrustful of friends, he was always prying into hidden motives, and his wayward temper drove him into troubles, which would have been shunned by a mind of more repose. His descriptions of Indian manners and life are skilfully drawn, and are valuable as being the results of much experience and observation; and in the marvel-

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the French government, for some political reason, soon after it was published. Coxe's *Carolana*, p. 118.

The first eight chapters of Hennepin's third work, the *Nouveau Voyage*, contain an account of La Salle's last voyage, travels in Texas, and death. This account is likewise closely copied from Le Clercq, who acknowledges himself indebted for his materials to the letters of Father Anastase, a missionary in that expedition. Hennepin acknowledges the same, but in many parts he copies the reflections and remarks of Le Clercq, which shows that he used Le Clercq's printed book, instead of Anastase's letters; and yet he gives no credit.

lous he deals less than many of the writers of his time, who are allowed the credit of fidelity and truth.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*La Salle begins his Voyage down the Mississippi.*

*— Intercourse with various Indian Nations on the Banks of the River. — Arrives at its Mouth, and takes Possession of the Country. — Returns to the Illinois, and thence to France.*

WHEN the Sieur de la Salle arrived at Fort Frontenac with the remnants of his company, as heretofore related, he immediately began to prepare for another expedition, determined to proceed with as little delay as possible to the Mississippi. It was his first object to recruit his forces, and he took into his service a company of Frenchmen, and also a number of eastern Indians, Abenakies, and Loups or Mahingans, as they are called by the French writers. He also adjusted the difficulties with his creditors, either by payment or satisfactory security; and he was enabled to provide for his future

expenses by pledging Fort Frontenac and the lands around it, as also his privilege of commerce with the natives. He met the secretary of the Count de Frontenac at Montreal, who was instructed to hold an interview with him on certain affairs appertaining to the government. The Sieur Dautray, son of the Procurer-General of Quebec, joined him as a volunteer.

Sending forward Father Zenobe with a large part of his men, and putting Fort Frontenac under the command of the Sieur de la Forest, he followed with the remainder to Niagara. A fort had here been built, called Fort de Conty, which was occupied by a small garrison. Everything being now in readiness, he embarked with his whole company in canoes from the head of the Niagara River, on the 28th of August, 1681, and, without any remarkable incident during the voyage, arrived at the Miamis River on the 3d of November.

Six weeks were here spent in the necessary arrangements. The company selected for the voyage down the Mississippi consisted of fifty-four persons, namely, twenty-three Frenchmen, eighteen savages, Abenakies and Loups, from New England, ten Indian women, and three children. The Indians insisted on taking these women with them to prepare their food, accord-

ing to their custom, while they were fishing and hunting.\*

It was decided to diverge from the old route, and Tonty and Zenobe were despatched in canoes, with the equipage and nearly all the men, along the southern border of Lake Michigan to the mouth of the Chicago River. The waters were closed with ice, as had been anticipated, and Tonty caused sledges to be constructed for dragging the canoes over the frozen surface. La Salle travelled on foot from the Miamis River, and joined him on the 4th of January, 1682. The whole party then began their journey up the Chicago, the canoes, baggage, provisions, and a wounded Frenchman unable to walk, being thus conveyed to its sources, and thence across the portage, and down the Illinois to Lake Peoria, where the river was open, and the canoes were launched again upon their proper element. No Indians were seen at the great village, they having gone to their winter habitations below. Fort Crèvecœur was found in good condition. There seems to have been a garrison in the fort,

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\* That women and children should be taken on such an enterprise would seem incredible, if it were not so stated by Father Zenobe, who is particular in his enumeration of the persons engaged. See Le Clercq's *Etablissement de la Foy*, Tom. II. p. 214. La Salle also mentions the women in his *Procès Verbal*, but not the children.

probably sent thither a few weeks before by La Salle, on his last arrival at the Miamis River, for there is no evidence of its having been occupied till now from the time it was abandoned by Tonty, soon after its construction. There was no delay at this place; and, on the 6th of February, the voyagers found themselves floating safely on the waters of the Mississippi, no accident having occurred to retard their progress or cloud their hopes.

They were detained here seven days, waiting for the Indians, who had loitered behind in consequence of the floating ice; and, on the day of their departure, they passed the mouth of the Missouri, the general appearance of which and its muddy waters are accurately described by Father Zenobe. Six leagues below, on the east side of the river, they landed near a village of the Tamaroa Indians, who were then all absent at their hunting grounds; and from this place, having no provisions in store but Indian corn, and being obliged to stop on the way to hunt and fish, they advanced slowly to the Ohio River, where they remained a short time. For a hundred and twenty miles below the mouth of the Ohio, the banks of the Mississippi were marshy and covered with reeds, which afforded no opportunity for hunting; and the next resting-place



was at the Chickasaw Bluffs, where they arrived on the 26th of February.

The hunters went into the woods in search of game, and all returned except Pierre Prudhomme. As Indians had been seen, who probably fled at the sound of the guns, it was feared that Prudhomme might have been captured or killed. To be on his guard, the Sieur de la Salle threw up an intrenchment, called Fort Prudhomme, a name which it retained long afterwards; and at the same time ordered a party of Frenchmen and Abenakies to follow the Indian tracks, and, if possible, to take some of the natives prisoners, without doing them any harm, by which means he hoped to gain intelligence of the lost man. Gabriel Barbiè and two Abenakies succeeded in discovering five natives, and in capturing two of them, whom they conducted to the camp. They were given to understand that no injury was intended, that they would be kindly treated, and that peace with their nation was desired. They reported themselves as belonging to the nation of Chickasaws, and acceded to the proposition for peace, but they could give no account of Prudhomme. They said that one of their villages was distant only half a day's journey. La Salle, Zenobe, and others, set off for the village; but, after travelling till night, the savages confessed that the

distance was four days' journey farther. In this state of uncertainty, owing probably to the difficulty of communicating with these Indians, and being without provisions, they all went back to the camp. One of the Chickasaws agreed to return with them, and the other promised to go to the village, and prevail on some of the principal men to meet La Salle on the bank of the river, at the distance of four days' journey below.

At length Prudhomme was found, after having been lost in the woods nine days. Pursuing their voyage for a hundred miles or more unmolested, and without being able to find the Chickasaw rendezvous by reason of a fog, they were all at once arrested by the sound of a drum on the western side of the river, and the calls of distant voices, as if giving an alarm. With his usual caution, the *Sieur de la Salle* pushed for the opposite shore, where trees were felled, and a place of defence was hastily constructed. This caution, however, proved to be unnecessary.

No demonstrations of hostility were shown by the natives, who cordially accepted the calumet of peace, visited the Frenchmen in their camp, and invited them to their village. The shore was lined by a concourse of people to receive them, cabins were assigned for their accommodation, fuel was supplied for their fires, abundance of provisions was brought to them, and for three

days they were regaled with a continual feast. These Indians, it was remarked, were of a much gayer humor than those of the north, more frank and open-hearted, more gentle in their manners, and decorous in their deportment. The Sieur de la Salle was treated with marked deference and respect. He took possession of the country in the name of his king, erected a cross, and adorned it with the arms of France. This was done with much pomp and ceremony, at which the savages testified great joy, and doubtless supposed it to be intended for their amusement. Father Zenobe also performed his part, by endeavoring to impress upon the multitude some of the mysteries of his faith, as far as he could do it without understanding a word of their language; and he did not despair of having produced good effects, especially as he observed, on his return, that the cross stood untouched, and had been surrounded by the Indians with a line of palisades. This village was called Kappa, one amongst many others occupied by the Akansa Indians in the vicinity of the Arkansas River. Two weeks were passed in these villages, and in all of them the reception was equally cordial.

The next nation below was that of the Taensas. They arrived here on the 20th of March. The villages were at the opposite side of a lake formed by the waters of the Mississippi. Zenobe

and Tonty were deputed to go with presents on an embassy to the king, whom they found in much regal state, and an absolute sovereign over his people, surrounded by numerous attendants, who approached him with ceremonious respect. He was not contented with showing all due hospitality and civilities to the ambassadors, but signified his intention to return the compliment by a visit to their commander. Two hours before the time appointed for the visit, a master of ceremonies appeared with six men, who cleared the way over which the great chief was to pass, and erected an awning of mats to shield him from the sun. He came clothed in a white robe beautifully woven from the bark of trees, preceded by two men bearing fans of white plumes. A third carried before him two plates of copper brightly polished. His demeanor was stately and grave, but complaisant and engaging; and throughout the interview he manifested tokens of satisfaction, confidence, and friendship.

Father Zenobe represents these savages as docile, tractable, and capable of intellectual culture, and as indicating by their manners and modes of life a farther advance in civilization than he had ever seen among the rude tribes of the north. Their cabins were built with walls of mud mixed with straw, and covered with mats of cane firmly wrought together and ornamented



with painted figures. Many convenient articles of furniture were in use, which gave an air of comfort to the dwellings. Their temples, which served as the burial-places of the chiefs, were adorned with embellishments. They were believed to be worshippers of the sun. Two Akansa guides, who could converse in the language of these people, doubtless prepared them to receive our voyagers without suspicion or distrust. From this place the guides returned to their nation.

Parting on amicable terms with the Taensas, the voyagers proceeded thirty or forty miles, when they discovered a pirogue, or canoe of wood, to which the Chevalier de Tonty gave chase; but he desisted when a large number of savages were seen on the shore; and again, with his customary precaution, La Salle drew his canoes to the opposite bank of the river. The calumet of peace, however, soon settled all doubts, and the Indians, who proved to be fishermen of the Natches tribe, came over and invited him to accompany them to their village, which was twelve miles from the river. Taking with him Zenobe and some others, he went to the village, and passed the night there, and was treated with the same kindness as heretofore, although the Natches were at enmity with the Taensas. Another cross was planted,



with the arms of France attached to it, by which ceremony the country was declared to be held by the king. The next day they returned to the camp, attended by the principal persons of the place, and also by a chief of Koroa, a village situate on the bank of the river about six miles below, to which they were invited by the chief.

At Koroa they were detained but a short time. A Chickasaw Indian, who had come with them from Fort Prudhomme, remained at this village. On the 3d of April, having advanced more than a hundred miles from Koroa, they saw several Indians employed in fishing, who fled as soon as they were discovered. Two Frenchmen and two Abenakies were sent on shore to reconnoitre. They were saluted by a shower of arrows, and soon returned, having been ordered not to discharge their guns, unless driven to an extremity. A drum was beaten, and the cry of war was raised. These belligerents were the Quinipisas. Not caring to engage in a quarrel without an object, the *Sieur de la Salle* passed along without returning the fire, and came to a village of the Tangibaos, which had been recently sacked and pillaged, and many dead bodies were seen lying in the deserted cabins.

At length, on the 6th of April, the river was observed to divide itself into three chan-

nels. The Sieur de la Salle separated his company into three divisions, and, putting himself at the head of one of them, he took the western channel, the Chevalier de Tonty the middle, and the Sieur Dautray the eastern. The water soon became brackish, and then perfectly salt, till, at last, the broad ocean opened fully before them. La Salle encamped for the night about twelve miles above the mouth of the western branch, and the next day he and Tonty examined the shores bordering on the sea, and ascertained the depth of the waters in the two principal channels. The day following was employed in searching for a dry place, removed from the tide and the inundations of the river, on which to erect a column and a cross. This ceremony was performed the next day.

The arms of France were attached to the column, with this inscription; *Louis the Great, King of France and Navarre, reigns; the 9th of April, 1682.* All the men were under arms, and, after chanting the *Te Deum*, they honored the occasion by a discharge of their muskets, and cries of *Long live the King.* The column was then erected by the Sieur de la Salle, who made a formal speech, taking possession of the whole country of Louisiana for the French King, the nations and people contained therein, the seas and harbors adjacent, and all the streams

flowing into the Mississippi, which he calls the great River St. Louis. A leaden plate was buried at the foot of a tree, with a Latin inscription, containing the arms of France and the date, and purporting that La Salle, Tonty, Zenobe, and twenty Frenchmen, were the first to navigate the river from the Illinois to its mouth. The cross was then erected with similar ceremonies. At the same time an account of these proceedings was drawn up, in the form of a *Procès Verbal*, certified by a notary, and signed by thirteen of the principal persons of the expedition.\*

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\* See a translation of the *Procès Verbal* in the APPENDIX, No. IV. Creditable writers have erred in assigning the date of this discovery to the year 1683; misled, perhaps, by the garbled narrative of Tonty, in which there would seem to be a misprint of the last figure, which has been retained in subsequent editions and translations. It is remarkable that, in the Letters Patent to Crosat, signed by the king's hand, and granted only thirty years after the discovery, the year is twice mentioned to have been 1683. The *Procès Verbal* sets this point at rest.

It has been said that the name *Louisiana* was first given to the country by La Salle on the present occasion. This is possible; yet, as Hennepin's *Description de la Louisiane* was printed the same year, it is more probable that the name had before been used, or at least spoken of as appropriate. La Salle does not profess, in the *Procès Verbal*, to give a new name, but seems rather to employ it as one already existing.

A scarcity of food obliged them to depart on their return up the river without delay. When they approached the inhospitable Quinipissas, they landed, and encamped not far from one of their villages. Four women were discovered, and brought to the camp; and soon afterwards a party of savages in pirogues came towards them, with an apparent intention of making an attack. They refused to accept the calumet, and, when a gun was fired, they all hurried away in a fright, having never before seen firearms. It being absolutely necessary to procure provisions, either by favor or force, one of the women was dismissed with presents, and given to understand that the others would be permitted to follow her, if the Indians would bring corn to the camp.

On the following day, one of the chiefs appeared, and the Sieur de la Salle went out to meet him. A peace was concluded, and hostages were given by the savages. This proved to be a finesse, however, and designed only to gain time for an accession to their numbers. While several Frenchmen were at the village, where a feast was prepared for them, armed men were seen coming from different quarters, and they all retired hastily to the camp. Before light the next morning, a sentinel heard a noise among the canes, and gave the alarm. All hands were called to arms, and at that moment the savages

raised the war cry, and discharged their arrows. This salutation was returned by a volley from the muskets, and a skirmish was kept up for nearly two hours. Ten of the savages were killed, and many others wounded, but no harm was done to their opponents. The Indians at last ran off, leaving their dead behind, and the Loups, true to the power of habit, bore away two Quinipissa scalps. So successful had La Salle been in his intercourse with the numerous tribes of Indians, whom he had met, that this was the first instance in which he was compelled to wage war upon them. Some of his people were eager to go and burn down the village of so perfidious a race, but he refused his consent.

On the 1st of May, they came to the Koroas, who had received them as friends on their way down, but were now seen in arms along the bank of the river. They were allies of the Quinipissas, who had sent messengers in advance. No hostilities were offered, and, putting on a bold countenance, the voyagers passed above the villages to the place where they had concealed a quantity of corn, which was found in good condition. This was an opportune supply, for they had suffered extremely from hunger since they left the mouth of the river. At Taensa and Akansa they met with the same friendly reception as before.

From this latter place the *Sieur de la Salle*



proceedèd, in advance of the others, with two canoes, as far as Fort Prudhomme, where he was overtaken by the whole party on the 2d of June. Here he was seized with a dangerous illness, which arrested his progress; but he despatched the Chevalier de Tonty to Mackinac, with orders to inform the Count de Frontenac, by the first conveyance, of the particulars of the voyage, and then to return to the Illinois. The good Father Zenobe remained with his commander, whose malady was so severe, that he was detained forty days, and then by slow movements he reached the Miamis River towards the end of September.

Tonty had been faithful and active in executing his orders. He had returned from Mackinac, and while on his way thither, he placed Dautray in command at the Miamis River, and Cauchois at Fort St. Louis, near which many Indians assembled and built two hundred new cabins. According to Father Zenobe's account, it was at this time the intention of the Sieur de la Salle to go down the Mississippi in the spring following, with a large number of people and families, to found a colony.

Wishing to communicate full and accurate information of his discoveries to the court of France, he prevailed on Father Zenobe to be the bearer

of his despatches. The resolution was suddenly taken, and Zenobe left the Miamis River on the 8th of October for Quebec, whence he sailed in the same vessel with the Count de Frontenac, and arrived in France before the end of the year.

Little is known of the plans or the operations of the *Sieur de la Salle* during the next ten or twelve months. The letters of Father Zenobe, who had been his devoted attendant for the last four years, fail us here, and no other records have come to light to supply their place. It can only be ascertained, that he passed the time in the Illinois country, and in the region of the upper lakes, probably prosecuting his traffic, the exclusive privilege of which was soon to terminate, and cementing his alliance with the Indian tribes.

Fort St. Louis was completed, and the best understanding was kept up with the Illinois Indians, in the midst of whose territory it was situate. His scheme of conducting a colony down the Mississippi was abandoned, and he formed the more extensive one of soliciting the government to aid him in this enterprise on a larger scale. Leaving the *Chevalier de Tonty* in the command at Fort St. Louis, and in the general charge of his interests, he departed for

Quebec in the autumn of 1683, sailed for France, and landed at Rochelle on the 13th of December.

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## CHAPTER IX.

*La Salle obtains a Commission to settle a Colony in Louisiana. — Sails with four Vessels to St. Domingo, and thence to the Gulf of Mexico. — Discord between him and the Commander of the Squadron.*

THE grand project, which now absorbed his thoughts, was an expedition by sea to the mouth of the Mississippi, with such an equipage of ships, colonists, and supplies, as would enable him to explore his newly-discovered country, and to establish permanent settlements. His hopes rested on the success he should have in persuading the ministers to adopt his plans, and furnish the aids necessary for carrying them into effect.

It was soon apparent, however, that much was to be done before the way could be prepared for a reception of this proposal. His enemies in Canada had spared no pains to excite a prejudice in the court against him, and to represent his conduct and designs in the most

unfavorable light. La Fevre de la Barre, successor to the Count de Frontenac in the government of Canada, took the lead in making these representations. Jealous of the friends of his predecessor, and willing to thwart the measures he had set on foot, La Barre listened complacently to all the tales that were told, either to his disadvantage or to that of his supporters. While the Sieur de la Salle was yet in the Illinois country, after his return from the Mississippi, the governor wrote to the minister, that the imprudence of La Salle had kindled a war between the French and the Iroquois, that his pretended discovery was of little account, that his designs were suspicious, and that the reports of Father Zenobe should be received with distrust. This insidious letter was despatched by the fleet in which Zenobe sailed for France, and of course before the new governor could have had any opportunity to gain a correct knowledge of the designs, transactions, or discoveries, of La Salle.

Five months afterwards, in April, 1683, he wrote again, affirming his conviction of the falsehood of what had been said of the new discoveries, of which La Salle had sent an account to the minister by the Recollect Father, and adding that this voyager was then at Green Bay, with some twenty vagabond Frenchmen and

savages, that he assumed the air of a sovereign, pillaged his countrymen, exposed the people to the incursions of the Iroquois, and covered all these violences under the pretext of a permission from the king to hold an exclusive commerce with the countries he should discover. The governor seemed to console himself, however, with the remark, that his privilege would cease in a month, when he would be obliged to come to Quebec, where his creditors, to whom he owed more than thirty thousand crowns, impatiently waited his return.

“Such is the lot of those men,” says Charlevoix, “whom a mixture of great faults and great virtues lifts above the common sphere. Their passions betray them into errors, and, if they do what others cannot do, their enterprises are not approved by all men; their success excites the jealousy of those, who remain in obscurity; their acts prove beneficial to some, and injurious to others; the latter take revenge by decrying them without moderation; the former exaggerate their merit. Hence the different portraits which are drawn, and of which none is an exact resemblance; and as hatred and the habit of evil speaking are more prevalent than gratitude and friendship, and as calumny finds an easier access to the public ear than commendation and praise, the portrait of the *Sieur de la Salle* was



more disfigured by his enemies than embellished by his friends.” \*

The representations of M. de la Barre, upon whatever foundation in truth they may have rested, and there appears to have been little, did not answer the end he expected. La Salle was now present, aided by his steady friends Frontenac and Zenobe, to make his own statements and support his own cause. His early and constant patron, Colbert, had died a few months before, but his son, Seignelay, was still a Secretary of State and Minister of the Marine. He saw at once the glory that must redound to France by settling with Frenchmen a country half as large as Europe. Whatever he might think of the faults of La Salle's temper and disposition, he confided in his talents, integrity, expanded views, determined resolution, and prodigious enterprise ; he acceded to his proposals, and gained for them the approbation of the court and the king.

It was decided that an expedition should be fitted out, for which the government would provide vessels, troops, munitions, and such other supplies as were wanted ; the whole to be under the command of the Sieur de la Salle. A new commission was granted to him, with all the powers necessary for the object. He was au-

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\* *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, Chap. X.

thorized to establish colonies in Louisiana; and the immense country and all its inhabitants from Lake Michigan to the borders of Mexico were subjected to his orders. These large powers imply an extraordinary degree of confidence in the ability and character of the man to whom they were intrusted. The commander of the squadron was to be under his direction, except in the business of navigating the ships at sea, till they arrived in America, and to assist him in making preparations for the voyage.

Four vessels of different dimensions were selected and put in readiness at Rochelle and Rochefort. The largest of these was the *Joly*, a frigate of thirty-six guns, commanded by Beaujeu, who was likewise the commander of the squadron. The second was called the *Belle*, which carried six guns, and had been given to the *Sieur de la Salle* by the king. The third was a ship of about three hundred tons' burden, called the *Aimable*, which belonged to a merchant of Rochelle, and on board of which were the implements, goods, and other effects, deemed necessary for a new settlement. The fourth was the *St. Francis*, a small vessel, in which were contained thirty tons of munitions and merchandise for *St. Domingo*.

The whole number of persons, who embarked

in these vessels, including the seamen and one hundred soldiers, was about two hundred and eighty. The high expectation entertained of the success of this enterprise prompted several respectable individuals to join it as volunteers, among whom were Moranget and Cavelier, nephews of La Salle, the latter only fourteen years old, Planterose, Thibault, Ory, and also Joutel, who had served sixteen years in the army, and who has since been known as the historian of the expedition. These persons and a few others were from Rouen, the native town of La Salle. A Canadian gentleman, by the name of Talon, and his family, and also some other families, consisting of men and young women, increased the number of volunteers to about thirty.

The missionary force was strong, being four Recollect Fathers, Zenobe Membré, Anastase Douay, Maxime Le Clercq, and Denis Marquet; and also three priests, Cavelier, the brother of La Salle, Chefdeville, his relation, and Majulle. At the head of the mission was Father Zenobe, whose experience and character eminently qualified him for this station. After their arrival in America, some of them were to remain in the new colony, and others to pursue their vocation among the Indians. On the first day of the

voyage, however, Marquet was so ill that he was set on shore and left behind.\*

The selection of the soldiers, artisans, and laborers, was intrusted to agents at Rochelle and Rochefort, who seem to have discharged their trust in a most faithless and reprehensible manner. It was extremely important that every man should be of good character, and competent to fulfil his duties. But the soldiers were an assemblage of vagabonds and beggars from the streets, some of whom had never handled a musket. Special orders had been given, that workmen should be engaged, who were skilled in the several mechanic arts, three or four for each ; but many of them proved, upon trial afterwards, to be totally ignorant of the trades in which they were to be employed. This deception in the choice of the soldiers and workmen, though remedied in part by La Salle before his departure, was most unfortunate in the result, and was one of the principal causes of the disastrous failure of the enterprise.

But the most serious misfortune of all was the disagreement between the two commanders. Beaujeu was a sensitive, querulous, troublesome man, of small mind and narrow conceptions, and

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\* Maxime Le Clercq had resided five years as a missionary in Canada. He is not the same as the author heretofore quoted, whose name was Chrétien Le Clercq.

possessing a most exalted opinion of his consequence as an officer of the king's navy. La Salle was reserved, keeping secret the tenor of his commission and instructions, making no explanations to Beaujeu, and seeming indifferent whether this captain indulged himself in a good or ill humor. Two such men were the last in the world to be united in promoting a common object.

The Sieur de la Salle arrived at Rochelle on the 28th of May, 1684, for the purpose of superintending the preparations. He found Beaujeu there, who began to unfold his griefs in a letter to the minister two days afterwards.

"You have ordered me, Sir," he writes, "to afford to this enterprise every facility in my power. This order I shall execute as far as possible; but permit me to take great credit to myself for consenting to obey the orders of the Sieur de la Salle, whom I believe to be a worthy man, but who has never served in war except against savages, and who has no military rank; whereas I have been thirteen years captain of a vessel, and served thirty years by sea and land. Moreover, he tells me, that, in case of his death, the command is to devolve on the Chevalier de Tonty. This is certainly very hard for me to bear, for although I am not now acquainted with the country, yet I must be a dull



man indeed not to obtain an adequate knowledge of it in a month after my arrival. I beseech you, therefore, so far to give me a share in the command, that they shall undertake no operation of war without consulting me. Of their commercial affairs I do not pretend to have any knowledge. I believe such an arrangement important to the king's service. If we should be attacked by the Spaniards, I am persuaded that men, who have never commanded in war, could not resist them, nor secure the advantages which another could do, who had been instructed by occasions and experience." \*

We here discover a source of dissatisfaction, which could hardly fail to generate continual discords and complaints. Three weeks later the captain wrote from Rochefort as follows.

"The Joly is now prepared for sea, and I hope to sail down the river to-morrow. It remains for the Sieur de la Salle to depart whenever he is ready. We have six months' provisions for one hundred soldiers, and eight months' for sixty sailors. We could put no more on board. The Sieur de la Salle has said nothing to me of his designs, and, as he is constantly changing his plans, I know not whether these

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\* Beaujeu's letters have never been printed. The extracts here given are translated from the originals, contained in the archives of the Marine Department at Paris.

provisions will be enough for the enterprise. He is so jealous, and so fearful that some one may penetrate his secrets, that I have refrained from asking him questions. He was offended because I inquired where we should find a pilot, who has been on the coast to which we are bound, and he has not yet given me any light on this subject. His suspicions are such, that he told me it would be necessary to prevent any one from taking the latitude of the coasts, and he was displeased when I replied, that I would keep my instruments under my own control, but that it would be impossible to prevent others from ascertaining the sun's altitude, since it could be done with a cross-staff made of two sticks.

“I have already informed you how disagreeable it is for me to be under the orders of the *Sieur de la Salle*, who has no military rank. I shall obey him, however, without repugnance, if you send me positive orders to that effect; but I desire that they may be of such a kind, that he cannot impute to me any fault, in case he should fail to execute what he has undertaken. I am induced to say this, because he has intimated that some persons have been suborned by his enemies to use their endeavors to defeat his enterprise. I wish also that you would inform me what is to be done in regard to the soldiers, for he pretends that on our arrival they are to be put

under his charge; but my instructions do not authorize this pretence, since I am to afford all the succors in my power, without endangering the safety and navigation of the vessel. Now, it is evident that with seventy men I can neither defend nor navigate safely the *Joly*, a ship of thirty-six guns. By the second article of my instructions, I am intrusted only with the manœuvres of the vessel at sea, which is likely to breed a schism between him and me, for, in case of an attack, he may pretend to command the sailors as well as the soldiers."

This letter was written more than a month before the departure of the squadron, and yet there was no change in the instructions. The minister probably thought that these points should be settled between the commanders themselves; and so they might have been, if their interests had been the same, and if they had cherished a mutual spirit of accommodation. Unhappily this spirit did not exist, and the natural consequences followed.

The four vessels sailed from Rochelle on the 24th of July. They had not gone more than fifty leagues to sea, when the bowsprit of the *Joly* was broken, and they all returned to the River of Rochefort for repairs. The bowsprit being replaced by a new one, they put to sea again on the 1st of August, bound for St. Do-

mingo. At the end of twenty days they descried the Island of Madeira, where Beaujeu proposed to anchor and take in water and refreshments. La Salle refused his consent, on the ground that they had plentiful supplies on board, and that to stop here would cause an unnecessary delay, and expose the designs of the voyage to the risk of being discovered by the Spaniards.

This refusal occasioned not only the displeasure of the captain, but the dissatisfaction and murmurs of the other officers and of the men. On the 6th of September, another incident occurred, which tended to widen the breach between the two commanders. They had reached the Tropic, and the sailors were preparing for the usual ceremony of plunging in a tub of water all those who had not before crossed the line. The Sieur de la Salle gave a positive order that none of his men should be required to submit to this absurd folly, and thereby drew upon himself the ill will of the subordinate officers and sailors who expected good cheer and bountiful gifts from so large a number of persons, as a compromise on their part for having the ceremony performed in as gentle a manner as the rules would allow. The captain was obliged to sustain this order, but the odium of it fell upon the Sieur de la Salle.

The voyage was prosperous till they approached the Island of St. Domingo, when there was a



storm and foul weather, and the vessels were separated from each other. It had been agreed that the Joly should put into Port de Paix, in the north part of the island; but Beaujeu seems to have changed this plan of his own accord, for he sailed round the western end of the island, and landed far south, at Petit Gouave, on the 28th of September. Four days afterwards, the Belle and Aimable came in; but the little bark St. Francis was taken by the Spaniards. This loss was severely felt, as the cargo consisted of articles important to the expedition.

The Sieur de la Salle went immediately on shore to provide refreshments and accommodations for the sick, who were landed and put under the care of Joutel and the surgeons. It was necessary, also, for him to see M. de Cussy, the Governor of St. Domingo, and M. Begon, the Intendant, who were required by instructions from the minister to render him such assistance as was requisite for advancing the objects of his voyage. Unfortunately these officers were at Port de Paix. He wrote to them, and requested that, if possible, they would meet him at Petit Gouave, since it was not in his power to leave the squadron. Meantime he was taken ill of a fever, which increased to such a degree of violence, that his life was despaired of. The state of his affairs at this time may be understood by the contents of



another letter from Beaujeu to the minister, dated the 20th of October.

“Were it not for the malady of the *Sieur de la Salle*,” he says, “I should have no occasion to render to you an account of our voyage, since I am charged only with the navigation, and he with the secret; but his illness obliges me to inform you of the situation in which we are now placed.”

He proceeds to give an account of the voyage, in which he complains that his wishes were always thwarted, that two of the vessels were wretched sailers, and that the *Joly* was so much filled with merchandise and baggage between the decks, that the men had fallen sick for the want of air and accommodations; and he then adds,

• “At last we arrived here, almost all sick; and the *Sieur de la Salle* himself has been attacked by a violent fever, which the surgeons think will be long and dangerous, affecting not more his body than his mind. A few days after he was taken ill, *M. Cavelier*, his brother, came to me, and requested that I would take charge of his affairs; but I excused myself, because I knew that, when restored to health, he would not approve what I had done, for I have often heard him say, that he was not obliged to any one for meddling in his concerns, or speaking of them.

He told me, however, that it was absolutely necessary to procure subsistence for the men with the goods on board the *Aimable* and *Belle*, and I gave orders for that purpose, established the rations, and appointed a commissary for their distribution.

“It is said that the Spaniards have in these seas six men-of-war, each carrying sixty guns. However this may be, or whatever may happen, I will carry home to you intelligence of the Mississippi, or perish in the attempt. It is true, if the *Sieur de la Salle* should not recover, I shall pursue different measures from those he has adopted, which I do not approve. Nor can I comprehend how a man should dream of settling a country, surrounded by Spaniards and Indians, with a company of workmen and women, instead of soldiers. But I shall undertake nothing without the consent of the governor and intendant, whose counsels I shall follow.

“If you will permit me to express my opinion, the *Sieur de la Salle* ought to have contented himself with the discovery of his river, without attempting to conduct three vessels and troops across the ocean, in so many different climates, and through seas utterly unknown to him. I agree that he is a man of learning, who has read much, and has some knowledge of navigation; but there is so great a difference between theory

and practice, that the man who possesses only the former will always deceive himself. The ability to transport canoes through lakes and rivers is also very different from that, which is required to conduct vessels and troops over remote seas. Pardon this little digression, which I have thought it necessary to make in my own justification, because I am aware that I have been represented to you as a man full of difficulties ; but I would only provide for whatever may happen, whereas they who make everything easy never know what to expect."

By this extract, and those preceding, we perceive all the troubles of this captain to centre in one point, the mortification of being under the orders of a man who had no military rank. Why did he accept the command, the terms of which he perfectly understood, and then give himself up to perpetual heart-burnings, and seize every possible occasion to vent his complaints, and to embarrass the measures which it was his duty as an officer to support? La Salle's great fault consisted in not comprehending or regarding the delicacy of his situation, and endeavoring to soothe his sensitive temper by more condescension and frankness of manners ; in not reposing confidence in a man, whose cordial coöperation was absolutely essential to the success of his enterprise.

The governor and intendant came to Petit Gouave, and in three weeks' time the Sieur de la Salle had gained sufficient strength to make the arrangements with them for pursuing his voyage. The proper stores of provisions were procured and laid in; and domestic animals, suited for settling a colony, were put on board. Consultations were held with competent pilots concerning the navigation of the West India seas and the Gulf of Mexico. It was resolved to steer to the south of the Island of Cuba, and touch at Cape St. Anthony, its western extremity. He was the more anxious to depart, as his motley company of soldiers were licentious and disorderly; some died of diseases contracted in the island, and others deserted.

In the voyage from France, the Joly had taken the lead of the squadron, but the Aimable, being the heaviest sailer of the three, was now placed in front, and the others were to be guided by her motions. Some of the passengers were transferred from the Joly to the Aimable, among whom were La Salle himself, Fathers Zenobe and Anastase, Cavelier, Chefdeville, and Joutel. The two commanders were thus separated, which, under the circumstances, was undoubtedly an important change, since it seems to have become a settled point that they could not respect each

other, nor act together in harmony. They all sailed from Petit Gouave on the 25th of November.

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## CHAPTER X.

*The Vessels make the Land at the Westward of the Mississippi. — The Colonists go ashore at the Bay of St. Bernard, and build a Fort. — La Salle explores the Bay with the Hope of finding one of the Mouths of the Mississippi.*

PARTING from St. Domingo, they coasted along the southern shore of Cuba, at one time standing to the south till they saw the Cayman Islands, and then turning northward to seek for the Isle of Pines. Here they cast anchor, and remained three days. They embarked again, and, after beating for some time against a head wind, they weathered Cape Corrientes, and on the 12th of December came to anchor at Cape St. Anthony.

The Gulf of Mexico now lay before them, and, staying there one night only, they set sail, and turned their prows in a northwesterly direction. Contrary winds drove them back, and detained them four days longer at Cape St. Anthony, which time they employed in filling the water-



casks. The wind and weather becoming favorable, the sails were spread, and a northwest course was taken, as before. The sky was for the most part cloudless, and there were opportunities for frequent observations; but unfortunately the latitude of the coasts was so imperfectly known, that these observations, however accurate, could be turned to little account. By some rude instrument La Salle had observed the elevation of the pole at the mouth of the Mississippi, and had made the latitude full two degrees too far south.

After eight days' sailing, however, it was certain that they could not be far from land. At length soundings were found, and the Belle, being the smallest of the three vessels, was sent ahead, and on the tenth day a signal from her mast gave notice that land was in sight. At the same time, a sailor from the mast-head of the Aimable saw land bearing northeast, at the distance of six leagues.

No one could tell, or conjecture with any degree of certainty, on what part of the coast they had arrived. It was finally agreed, that they must be in the Bay of Appalachie, which is nearly three hundred miles east of the Mississippi, and far to the eastward of the meridian of Cape St. Anthony. As they had all the while been steering to the west of north, it would seem

strange that they should come to such a conclusion. But La Salle and Beaujeu had been told in St. Domingo, by pilots who professed to have a knowledge of the navigation of the gulf, that a strong current set at all times towards the Bahama Channel, around the Cape of Florida, and they now supposed themselves to have been wafted much farther eastward by this current, than was accounted for by the ships' reckoning. This decision was fatal, for they were actually at the westward of the main stream of the Mississippi, probably not less than a hundred miles, and near the Achafalaya Bay; but even at this place, if they had landed, they could not have failed to find one of the western branches of the Mississippi.

In conformity with this decision, it was determined to coast along to the west, with the expectation of finding the mouths of the Mississippi. On the 1st of January, 1685, La Salle landed in a boat at the head of a few men, but without making any discovery, and, at the end of nine days, so much was he bewildered that he still thought himself in the Appalachie Bay, on the coast of Florida. He held intercourse with some of the savages who came on board, but no knowledge could be gained from them. At length, twenty days after the first discovery of land, it was ascertained, by the change of lati-

tude, that the coast was tending towards the south. The delusion now vanished, and it was obvious that he was approaching the borders of Mexico, near the Magdalen River, and the Bay of Espiritu Santo. Yet he cherished the vain hope, that some branch of the Mississippi might empty itself into the Gulf of Mexico, not far from this place.

For the purpose of observing the country, and searching for fresh water, Joutel, with a party of men, was set on shore. They found only salt water; the soil was barren and sandy; they saw a herd of deer, and killed many ducks and wild turkeys. La Salle himself was preparing to land and reconnoitre, when the *Joly* came in sight, which detained him on board. She had been separated from the other two vessels sixteen days, having kept at sea to avoid the shoals. The lieutenant came on board the *Aimable*, with a harsh message from the captain, in which he complained that he had been left behind by design. This was not true, for the *Joly* was the best sailer, and was ahead when she was last seen. It is evident, from what had already passed, that Beaujeu cared little whether he kept company with the other vessels or not, and that he followed his own choice in standing farther out to sea. This new misunderstanding between the two commanders tended only to

throw additional obstacles in the way of the enterprise. They met very rarely afterwards. The business relating to the Joly was transacted between La Salle and Beaujeu's lieutenant.

As all the officers were now satisfied that they had gone much too far westward, there was a discussion as to the expediency of retracing their course, and seeking again for the Mississippi. This was the desire of the Sieur de la Salle, and he proposed it to Beaujeu, who demanded a new supply of provisions before he would undertake the voyage. He was offered enough for fifteen days, within which time the Mississippi might be discovered; but this offer he would not accept. The discussion ran into a dispute, which continued for some time; but La Salle would not comply with Beaujeu's demands, because he suspected, and with apparent justice, that he would sail away for the West Indies, and leave him without fulfilling his promise. Whether he did not cross his own designs, and hasten his fate, by standing so rigidly upon these points, it would be fruitless now to inquire. He probably thought, from what he knew of Beaujeu's character and conduct, that the last hope of a compromise had fled.

In the mean time, the vessels returned twenty or thirty miles along the coast, till they came to the outlet of the Bay of St. Bernard, not then

known to La Salle, and named by him St. Louis, but which is now called Matagorda Bay, in the southwestern corner of Texas. The soldiers and others, except the ships' crews, were landed near the entrance of the bay, on the west side, and were regaled to their hearts' content with the fresh provisions afforded by the deer, wild fowl, and fish, which were found in abundance. Near this place was established the first encampment. A temporary camp for a part of the company was likewise formed at a considerable distance farther up the bay, on a point of land called Point Hurier, from the name of the officer who commanded there. An exploring party was sent out, under the command of Joutel and Moragnet, with orders to proceed along the shore around the western end of the bay. After three days' march, they were stopped by a river, which they could not cross without a boat. The vessels on the other side of the bay were in full view, and the *Sieur de la Salle* crossed over in a boat, and met the explorers at this place.

He had already given orders for the outlet of the bay to be sounded, with the design of bringing in the *Aimable* and *Belle*, if the depth of water should prove sufficient. There were two channels, and an island between them. The pilots reported favorably, and set up signals on the shoals. The cannon, and some other heavy



articles, were taken out of the *Aimable*, and the captain was directed to run her into the bay. The pilot of the *Belle*, who knew the channel, was sent to his assistance, but he refused to admit him on board, and said he could manage his own ship. He hoisted the sails, and in a short time contrived to run her upon a shoal, where she bilged, and could not be removed. The boat, which hung at the stern, was also maliciously staved in pieces. Some part of the cargo was saved, but the larger and most valuable portion was lost. Beaujeu must have the credit of allowing his boats to be employed in this service. On one occasion, when a boat was dashed against the side of the wreck by the violence of the waves, Father Zenobe was plunged into the sea, and was rescued by a rope, which he caught from the hand of a sailor standing on the deck.

This loss was the more to be deplored, as the vessel contained nearly all the implements and tools intended for establishing the colony. The circumstances were such, says Joutel, that no one could doubt the disaster to have been the effect of a premeditated design of the captain, which he calls, truly enough, one of the blackest and most detestable that could be conceived in the heart of man.

When this accident happened, the *Sieur de la Salle* was on the opposite side of the bay, where

the savages had already made their appearance, and carried off three men, while they were employed in cutting down a large tree, to be formed into a canoe. He went to the village, and brought back the men without opposition. He also succeeded in bartering some hatchets with them for two canoes, which he very much wanted; and it may here be observed, that he seems to have possessed a deep knowledge of the character of savages, and an extraordinary power over their minds, for it rarely happened that difficulties began when he was personally present.

It would have been fortunate if all his companions had possessed the same knowledge and the same power. We have an instance in point at this time. A bale of blankets had floated away from the wreck of the *Aimable* to the margin of the lake on the opposite side. The Indians picked it up, and, naturally enough, appropriated the blankets to their own use. He thought it would be a good opportunity to prevail on them to let him have canoes in exchange. Du Hamel, the second lieutenant of the *Joly*, offered to go with a party in his boat and negotiate the affair. They landed, and marched up to the village in a resolute manner, with arms in their hands, so that the Indians knew not whether to regard them as friends or enemies. Unable to make themselves understood, they

finally went back, seizing a parcel of skins and two canoes as booty. The Indians looked upon this act as a declaration of war, pursued the party, overtook them in the night on the shore where they had landed and gone to sleep, poured in upon them a discharge of arrows, killed two and wounded two others, and then fled, frightened at the sound of a musket, fired by one of the men while rousing from his slumbers.

The *Sieur de la Salle* bitterly lamented this catastrophe. *Ory* and *Desloges*, the men that had been slain, were volunteers, whom he esteemed and valued as friends. The event cast a gloom over the minds of all; they were struck with terror at the thought of Indians, murmured at their condition, and began to talk of returning to France, and abandoning an enterprise so thickly beset with dangers. If they had been endowed with the gift of foresight, their hearts might well have sunk within them. But the firm spirit of *La Salle*, which never sank, or even drooped, under any burden, sustained him now as in former trials, and his example was a gleam of encouragement to the desponding, the irresolute, and the faint-hearted.

Meantime *Beaujeu* was preparing to depart. He nourished his ill humor to the last. The cannon balls were all on board the *Joly*. He

refused to take them out, because he could not do it without removing some of his cargo. Eight cannon were thus left for the defence of the colony, and not a single ball. Taking with him the perfidious captain and the crew of the *Aimable*, he set sail for France on the 12th of March.

The whole number of persons then remaining in the colony is not exactly known. Joutel mentions one hundred and eighty, besides the crew of the *Belle*, consisting of soldiers, volunteers, workmen, women, and children. The stock of provisions from the vessels was nearly exhausted, and their future supply depended mainly on the chase. Fortunately the surrounding prairies were covered with buffaloes, which were easily killed with their firearms, and which furnished excellent food; the rivers abounded with fish; the cattle, swine, and fowls, which they had brought from St. Domingo, thrived and multiplied; and, after the failure of one experiment in a barren soil, they succeeded in producing grain and vegetables from European seeds.

To provide a shelter for themselves and their goods, and a protection against the Indians, they built a temporary fort on a hillock of sand, with the timbers and planks of the *Aimable*, which floated ashore after the vessel went to pieces, and with driftwood from the beach. While

this work was in progress, the *Sieur de la Salle*, taking fifty men with him, set out on a tour of discovery. He was unwilling to relinquish the hope that this bay, stretching far to the eastward, was in fact one of the mouths of the *Mississippi*. The captain of the *Belle* was ordered to sound the shores of the bay, and to sail along so as to hold communication with him. The fort was left under the command of *Joutel*, who was directed not to have any intercourse with the Indians.

Accompanied by his brother *Cavelier*, and by Fathers *Zenobe* and *Maxime*, he began his march, and explored the country around the west end of the bay, till he came to a river of considerable size, which he called the *Vaches*, on account of the immense number of wild cows, or buffaloes, seen on its banks. The name is still retained in the maps. On the western side of this river, six miles from its entrance into the bay, a place was found which he thought a better situation for an encampment, than the one first selected on the barren sand-hills near the sea. He therefore sent the *Sieur de Villeperdry* back across the bay in a canoe, with orders for all the company to march and join him, except thirty men, who were to remain in the fort with *Joutel*. Not long afterwards, these men were ordered to follow. Stopping at Point



Hurier, they took with them the party at that place, and about the middle of July the whole colony assembled at the new encampment on the River Vaches.

The Indians had hovered about the fort at different times in the night, howling like dogs and wolves, but had done no mischief. Two men had deserted; and the Sieur de Gros, while hunting snipes in a marsh, was bitten by a rattlesnake. At first the wound excited no alarm; but the leg gradually swelled, till the surgeon advised an amputation. A fever ensued, and he lived but two days. A conspiracy was likewise engendered in the fort. It was the plan of the conspirators to murder Joutel and others, and then to run away with such effects as they could carry. The plot was detected in time to prevent its execution.

A beautiful spot had been chosen for the new encampment. It was on an elevation near the bank of the river. Vast plains stretched away towards the west, covered with green herbage and tufts of trees; at the south and east lay the smooth waters of the bay, fringed with verdant borders; and northward the view extended over a wide expanse of prairie grounds, terminated in the far distance by a range of sloping hills and lofty forests. Such is the description of Joutel; and if the charms of nature, fair skies,

and a bountiful clime, had been all that was needed to insure the happiness and fulfil the expectations of the colonists, they might here have sat down contented with the present, and cheered with encouraging hopes of the future. But with the burden that now weighed upon their spirits, the music of nature's harmony was discord in their souls.

Their first care was to erect a habitation, and to surround it with a new fort. This was a work of incredible labor and fatigue. It was three miles to the nearest copse of wood in which timber suited to the purpose could be obtained. The trees were cut and hewn, and then dragged by the men over grass and weeds through that long distance to the camp. The carriage-wheels of one of the guns were used to aid the operation; but, with all the contrivances that could be devised, the toil was extreme, and some of the men sank under it. When the company first assembled at the new encampment, several of their number had died, among whom was the *Sieur de Villeperdry*, and within a few days thirty more followed them to the grave. These were mostly soldiers, some of whom had taken diseases at *St. Domingo*. The loss most lamented was that of the master-carpenter, who wandered from the camp, and was never again heard of. These continual inroads of death cast a gloom

over the survivors, which depressed their spirits and abated their energies.

The mind of the Sieur de la Salle sustained this weight of cares with its accustomed firmness and constancy. He neither spared himself in the work, nor allowed the healthy and strong to be idle. Taking the place of the chief carpenter, he marked out the tenons and mortises, and prepared the timbers for the workmen. He also sent twenty men to bring away the remnants of the old fort, which was effected without difficulty by the Belle, and by a raft towed at its stern. The Vaches was navigable as high up as the new fort. The materials being thus brought together, the work went on with more speed, and it was soon in a condition for shelter and defence. It was named Fort St. Louis.

These preparations being made, in such a manner as to afford security to the colonists, his next design was to explore the bay, and to ascertain whether, in any part, it received a branch of the Mississippi. The illness of his brother detained him for some time, during which he made short excursions for several leagues around, merely to observe the country. It was not till late in the month of October that he was ready for this tour. He then departed with twenty men, leaving the fort and the colonists under the command of Joutel. He had also

resolved to make use of the Belle in this expedition, and he ordered the captain to sail up the bay, and to station the vessel near the western shore, and remain there till intelligence should be received from him. His clothes, papers, and other effects, were put on board, as he probably thought they would be more secure there than in the fort.

A discharge of five cannon was the signal of his departure. Crossing the River Vaches, he went down to the bay by land, and thence eastward along the shore, keeping in sight of two or three canoes, which contained a part of the company. In this way he proceeded to the place where the Belle was at anchor, and, wishing to know how near she could be brought to the land, he sent the pilot with five men in a canoe to take soundings. Night coming on, and their work not being yet done, these men went ashore, kindled a fire to cook their supper, and were so careless in keeping guard, that the savages fell upon them, and murdered every man. Uneasy at their long absence, La Salle himself took a canoe, and went in search of them. He found their mangled bodies stretched on the ground, and half devoured by wild beasts.

He returned to the Belle, ordered the officers to remain in that place till they should hear

from him, and then went ashore with two canoes. He caused the canoes to be sunk in a small creek, and, each man taking what he could in his knapsack, marched towards the east. In a few days they came to a large river, since known as the Colorado, which flows into the bay, and which they crossed. The particulars of this journey have not been recorded, either by Anastase or Joutel, as neither of them was of the party. But since its whole object was to discover one of the mouths of the Mississippi, which the *Sieur de la Salle* conjectured might fall into the Bay of St. Louis, it cannot be doubted that he passed around the eastern end of the bay, and examined all the rivers, so far as to satisfy himself that his conjecture was erroneous.

One man, named Duhaut, deserted the company after they had been several days out, and returned alone to the fort. He had given offence to the commander, and quarrelled with Moragnet, his nephew. On other occasions he had shown himself factious and troublesome.

After an absence of more than four months, La Salle was again received with joy by the colonists at the fort. Seven or eight of his men only came with him. The others had turned off from the track to go and search for the Belle, in the place where she had been left. Joutel



represents their first appearance as forlorn and sad; their clothes ragged, Cavelier's short cassock hanging in tatters, some without hats, others destitute of linen. The rest of the party returned the next day; they could not find the Belle; they had searched in vain along the shore; at the fort she had not been heard from; and the melancholy conviction seemed to rest upon the minds of all that she was lost.

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## CHAPTER XI.

*First Journey towards the Illinois. — Census Indians. — La Salle taken ill of a Fever near the Red River. — Returns to the Bay of St. Bernard. — Second Journey towards the Illinois. — Conspiracy against La Salle. — His Death.*

SEVERAL days passed away, and, no news of the Belle having been obtained, the Sieur de la Salle was more deeply impressed than ever with the perplexities and perils of his situation. Hitherto his hopes had clung to this vessel, as affording the means of finding the mouth of the Mississippi by sea, or, in the last extremity, of

procuring relief from St. Domingo, and of conveying a knowledge of his distresses to France. These hopes were now all cut off. Removed nearly two thousand miles from any civilized settlement to which he could look for succors, surrounded on every side by hostile savages, depending on chance for the daily subsistence of a colony which he was bound to sustain and protect, he had no other support left than the strong arm of a beneficent Providence, no other resource than the unsubdued energy of his own resolute spirit.

His usual calmness did not forsake him, nor was it a time to indulge unavailing regrets. One course only remained, which was to open a communication with the Illinois and seek assistance from Tonty, his faithful friend, who was stationed there awaiting his orders. Through this channel, also, intelligence might be sent to France. He resolved to undertake this journey, and made preparations without delay. The party consisted of twenty men, including his brother Cavelier, Father Anastase, Moragnet, Bihorel, Le Clerc, Hurier, Hiens a surgeon, and Nika the Indian hunter, who had accompanied him from Canada to France, and thence on the voyage. Hiens was a German from Wittenberg, who had been a bucanier, and had joined him at St. Domingo. On the morning of the 22d of April, 1686, they

performed their devotions in the chapel, and then took their departure from the fort, directing their course to the northeast.

The colony was left under the charge of Joutel. A few days afterwards, he was surprised to see a canoe coming up the river, containing Chefeville, the Sieur de la Sablonnière, and others, who had escaped from the Belle. They told the sorrowful tale of the wreck of that vessel. It had been driven to the south shore of the bay, and stranded on the beach, three months before. Planterose and five others had been previously swallowed up by the waves, in a dark night, while returning in a canoe from the land, where they had been for water. Three or four died on board. The number of hands was thus so much diminished, that, when the winds rose, the bark could not be managed, and she ran aground. Several of the men perished on a raft, which they had unskilfully constructed; and the remainder succeeded with difficulty in reaching the shore on another raft. They saved a small stock of provisions, and a few articles, among which were the Sieur de la Salle's clothes and papers. Here they continued, on a desolate strand, for three months, till a canoe accidentally floated to the beach, in which they returned to their companions at the fort.

Few incidents are related as having occurred

during the absence of La Salle on this journey. The Indians sometimes assailed the hunting parties, but they made no hostile attempts upon the fort. The perfidious Duhaut stirred up a mutiny in the camp, which gave trouble to Joutel, but which, by a timely discovery, he was enabled to suppress. Yet he could not entirely assuage discontents, which were the offspring of heavy disappointments and hardships. But it was not all a scene of grief and gloom. The *Sieur Barbier* gained the heart of one of the young maidens, which furnished an occasion for the festivities of a wedding. Joutel was assisted in the arduous duties of his command by the counsels of *Father Zenobe*, a man of wisdom, fortitude, and experience.

After three days' journey, the *Sieur de la Salle* met a party of Indians in the midst of a beautiful prairie, some on foot, and some riding on horses. These latter wore boots and spurs, and sat in saddles, which was a proof that they had a commerce, directly or indirectly, with the Spaniards on the borders of Mexico. They were peaceful and courteous, and invited the travellers to their village; but, as this lay to the northwest, out of the track, the invitation was declined. The party took the precaution to fortify themselves that night, as they did afterwards, with palisades and fallen trees. Travelling for two days over prairie

grounds, they came to a river, undoubtedly a branch of the Colorado, which they called the Robec.

Here they fell in with a prodigious number of buffaloes, and killed as many as they wanted with the greatest ease, stopping five or six days to dry the meat, and providing as large a quantity as they could conveniently carry, so that they might march for several days without being hindered on the way to hunt for game. Five or six miles beyond, they came to another river, which Father Anastase says was broader and deeper than the Seine at Paris, bordered on one-side by the most beautiful trees, and on the other by extensive plains. They crossed it on a raft. This was the Colorado. It was afterwards called the *Maligne* by La Salle, in consequence of one of his party having been devoured in it by a crocodile.\*

The crossing of rivers was the most serious impediment in their way. Many of the smaller streams could be forded, but many others were too deep for such a passage. The larger rivers could only be passed with rafts, and these it took much time to construct. Sometimes they would fell trees across the stream, and thus form a

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\* In some of the old maps, the name *Maligne* is applied to the Brazos, and the Colorado is called the *River of Canes*; but, from the narratives both of Joutel and Anastase, it is more probable that the Colorado was the *Maligne*.



bridge. At other times they would cut down trees on each side, in such a manner that the tops would meet in the middle. On marshy banks, where trees did not grow, the rafts were made of canes. Frequently there was danger from the rapidity of the current, and from the water being so deep that the bottom could not be reached with their poles. Some of the men were good swimmers, and could cross with an axe whenever the occasion required.

At no great distance from the Colorado, their course turned more to the east, and they soon found themselves in the midst of a numerous tribe of Indians, called the Biskatronge, who received them with all the kindness imaginable, invited them to their cabins, detained them as long as they could by persuasion, and then furnished them with guides, and conveyed them across a river in their canoes. The next tribe was that of the Kirononas, who were not less friendly and hospitable.

Parting from these nations, they were alarmed one day by Nika, who cried out that he was dead. He had been bitten by a snake. This accident caused great anxiety to them all, for Nika's fidelity and skill in hunting rendered his services extremely important. Remedies were applied, and in a few days the wound was healed.

The next adventure was at a large and rapid

river, where the *Sieur de la Salle*, attempting to cross on a raft of canes, with half of his party, was hurried violently down by the current, till he was out of sight of those left behind, who supposed they were all drowned; but at sunset they appeared on the opposite bank, the raft having been caught by the branches of a floating tree, which enabled them to reach the land. The others crossed the next day. But it was a dismal, marshy place, where they were midleg in water while framing the raft; and Father Anastase was obliged to put his Breviary in his cowl to prevent its being wet. This was probably the River Brazos.

They were entangled for two days among canes, through which it was necessary to cut a path. Soon afterwards, a beautiful country opened to their view, and the travelling was easy and agreeable. They had not gone far, when they entered the territory of a nation of Indians, whom they found less barbarous, better provided with the conveniences of life, and more comfortable in their dwellings, than any they had seen. They first met a single Indian, who, with his wife and family, was engaged in hunting. He gave one of his horses to the *Sieur de la Salle*, and such provisions as he could spare, and invited the whole party to the village. He went forward to give notice of their approach, and a

large company of warriors and others came out, fancifully dressed in skins and adorned with feathers, carrying the calumet with much ceremony, and exhibiting in all their movements an unusual display. The Sieur de la Salle was received in a sort of triumph, and lodged in the cabin of the great chief. Smiling faces, friendly salutations, and good cheer, were proffered from every quarter.

This village was one of a large number, scattered up and down on both sides of a river for many miles in extent, each having a different name. They were inhabited by the Ceniz Indians. Some of the habitations were forty feet high, in the shape of a beehive, having a framework of trees, with their tops bent and intertwined. Such a dwelling would accommodate two families. The fire was in the centre, and beds of mats were arranged around the walls, elevated three or four feet from the ground. Some articles were seen, which evidently came from the Spaniards in Mexico, such as silver spoons, pieces of money, and clothes. Horses likewise were common, which must originally have been obtained from the same quarter. Yet these people, as they said, had never seen any Spaniards in their villages, but procured the articles they possessed from the Choumans, their allies, who resided at the westward, between them

and Mexico. They were ready to barter their horses. One was sold for a hatchet, and another was offered to Father Anastase in exchange for his cowl by a savage, who was struck with admiration of that part of his dress. The offer was not accepted.

The same remarkable power which La Salle could always exercise over the savage mind, was shown on this occasion. He won the respect and confidence of all ranks. They entertained him bountifully for five days, when he departed, and, crossing a large river, which ran through the midst of the Ceniz villages, undoubtedly the River Trinity, marched forward to the nation of the Nassonis. This nation was in alliance with the Ceniz, and seemed to possess the same habits, manners, and character.

At about twenty miles farther onward, it was discovered that four men had deserted and gone back to the Nassonis; and in a short time the Sieur de la Salle and his nephew Moragnet were attacked by a violent fever, which compelled them to stop. They were reduced so low, that it was more than two months before they were able to resume their journey; and, in their present condition, it was hazardous, and indeed impracticable, to pursue their route towards the Illinois. They depended entirely on the chase for their food, and by this long detention



the stock of powder was so much exhausted, that it would not be possible for the remainder to carry them through a dreary march of more than a thousand miles, even if they should be so fortunate as to meet a friendly reception from all the savages on the way ; and this was not to be expected. Compelled by this cruel necessity, La Salle took the only course that was left ; he resolved to go back to the Bay of St. Bernard.

The reader need not be detained with the incidents of this journey. In fact, very few have been related. Their fatigues were much relieved by five horses, which they had purchased of the natives. One of the men, as mentioned above, was swallowed by a crocodile, while crossing the Colorado ; and Bihorel wandered away and was lost. When they arrived at the fort on the 17th of October, after an absence of almost six months, Joutel says there were only eight men with La Salle. Three had left the company on their way out, being unable to endure the fatigue, and it is not known whether they ever returned. Speaking of this journey, Father Anastase says, "It would be difficult to find in history an instance of a more intrepid and invincible courage than that of the *Sieur de la Salle* in the midst of disheartening events ; he was never cast down, and he constantly hoped, with the aid of Heaven, to accomplish his enterprise, 2



in spite of the obstacles by which it was opposed."

The route he pursued cannot be traced on a map with any degree of exactness, because there are no well-defined landmarks by which to be guided; and even the names of the Indian tribes have long ago passed away. It may be assumed as certain, however, that he crossed the three large rivers, Colorado, Brazos, and Trinity; the first, not many miles above the present town of Montezuma; and the second, as far above the town of Washington. Father Anastase informs us that the course was for several days north-east, and then more easterly. The Nassonis Indians were at some distance east of the Trinity, and the journey terminated beyond the Nassonis, probably about midway between the Trinity and the Red River, near the head-waters of the Sabine, and fifty or sixty miles northwest of Nacogdoches.\*

After his arrival at the fort, he employed the people in constructing a new store-house, and in providing other means for lessening the discomforts of their situation. He soon formed the design of another journey to the Illinois, and began to make preparations. He was again

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\* The particulars of this journey are taken from the narrative of Father Anastase, the only person of the party who wrote an account of it.

taken down by an illness, which caused delay, and ten weeks passed before he was ready.

For this tour, according to Anastase, he selected twenty men ; Joutel says seventeen. Among them were Father Anastase, Cavelier the Priest, and young Cavelier his nephew, Joutel, Moragnet, Duhaut, Larcheveque, Hiens, Liotot, Talon, De Marle, Teissier, Saget, and the Indian Nika.\* The fort was put under the command of the Sieur Barbier, with whom were Father Zenobe and Maxime, Chefdeville, Sablonnière, and others, being twenty persons in all, of whom seven were women and girls.† The Sieur de la Salle, calling the people together, addressed them in an eloquent speech, says Anastase, “with that engaging air which was so natural to him,” presenting such motives to sustain their constancy as the occasion would admit, and encouraging them to hope for his speedy return with succors to relieve their distresses.

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\* Talon was a son of the Canadian gentleman of that name, who sailed from Rochefort, and who had died. His widow was left in the camp, with several young children.

† This is the statement of Joutel, who speaks confidently as to the number remaining in the fort. When they assembled at the first encampment, after the departure of the Joly he mentions the whole number of persons as being one hundred and eighty, besides the crew of the Belle. It follows that at least one hundred and forty-three had since died. *Journal Historique*, pp. 95, 96, 157, 158.

Having taken a melancholy leave of their companions, the travellers departed from the fort on the 12th of January, 1687. As they passed over the same route that had been pursued on the former journey, the incidents were of a similar kind; hunting buffaloes and game for food, crossing rivers, marching through swamps, and encountering the numerous ills and privations to which they would naturally be exposed on such a march. They met companies of the natives more frequently than before, who uniformly received them rather with a kind welcome, than with reserve or a show of hostility, entertaining them in the villages, supplying them with provisions, helping them across rivers with their canoes, and selling horses for a small compensation. They were also aided in crossing some of the streams by a portable canoe, consisting of a light frame of wood covered with buffalo skins.

They thus proceeded without any remarkable adventure or accident for the space of two months. On the 15th of March, they came near to a place where the *Sieur de la Salle* had buried a quantity of Indian corn and beans on his last journey, and he ordered *Duhaut*, *Hiens*, *Liotot*, *Larcheveque*, *Teissier*, *Nika*, and his footman *Saget*, to go and bring it away. They found the place, but the corn and beans were

spoiled. Nika, in the mean time, killed two buffaloes, and they despatched Saget to inform the commander, and request him to send horses for the meat. He accordingly directed Moragnet, De Marle, and Saget, to go thither with horses, and to send back one of them loaded with meat for immediate use, and wait till the rest was dried.

When Moragnet arrived, he found that the meat had been smoked, though it was not dry enough for that process; and Duhaut and the others had laid aside certain parts to be roasted for themselves, which it seems was the custom on similar occasions. Moragnet, in a passionate manner, reprimanded them for what they had done, and took away not only the smoked meat, but the pieces they had reserved, saying, in a menacing tone, that he would do with it as he pleased.

They were irritated at this conduct, which was both rash and unreasonable. Duhaut had an old grudge against Moragnet, and was ready to take revenge. He brought over Liotot and Hiens to second his design. In short, they conspired to murder Moragnet, Nika, and Saget. In the night, after they had supped and were asleep, the horrible act was committed by Liotot, who butchered them all with an axe. Nika and Saget expired immediately, but Moragnet lin-

gered for a short time, when the assassins compelled De Marle, who was not in the conspiracy, to put an end to his sufferings. That the rage of passion should drive these desperate men to so violent a deed, as that of the murder of Moragnet, is conceivable, because similar atrocities have been committed on other occasions; but what could impel them to involve in the same doom the innocent Nika and Saget? For two years the faithful services of Nika had been unremittingly employed in providing the means of subsistence for them as well as for others. Why this black ingratitude and cold-blooded barbarity? They afford a proof, that this crime was not the effect of a momentary impulse, but of a deliberate purpose. These men were the devoted though humble friends of the commander, whom they would defend in a time of peril, and who, if forced by necessity, might avenge his wrongs with a resolute arm.

As the conspirators had begun the work of blood, they laid a scheme on the spot for destroying the *Sieur de la Salle*, in conformity, it may be, with a previous design, and under the dread of suffering the just punishment of their guilt at his hands. They deliberated on the method of doing it for two or three days. Meantime *La Salle* expressed anxiety at the long absence of *Moragnet*, and seemed to have fore-



bodings of some unhappy event, for he asked whether Duhaut and his associates had not shown symptoms of dissatisfaction. He feared, also, that the whole party might have been cut off by the savages.

Finally, he determined to go himself in search of them, leaving the camp, on the 19th of March, under the charge of Joutel. He was accompanied by Father Anastase, and two natives who had served him as guides. After travelling about six miles, they found the bloody cravat of Saget near the bank of a river, and, at the same time, two eagles were seen hovering over their heads, as if attracted by food on the ground. La Salle fired his gun, which was heard by the conspirators on the other side of the river. Duhaut and Larcheveque immediately crossed over at some distance in advance. La Salle approached, and, meeting Larcheveque, asked for Moragnet, and was answered vaguely that he was along the river. At that moment, Duhaut, who was concealed in the high grass, discharged his musket, and shot him through the head. Father Anastase was standing by his side, and expected to share the same fate, till the conspirators told him that they had no design upon his life.

La Salle survived about an hour, unable to

speaking, but pressing the hand of the good Father to signify that he understood what was said to him. The same kind friend dug his grave, and buried him, and erected a cross over his remains. "Thus perished," says he, "our wise conductor, constant in adversities, intrepid, generous, engaging, adroit, skilful, and capable of anything. He who, during a period of twenty years, had softened the fierce temper of a vast number of savage nations, was massacred by his own people, whom he had loaded with benefits. He died in the vigor of life, in the midst of his career and his labors, without the consolation of having seen their results." \*

The conspirators all returned to the camp, and the grief with which the sad intelligence was

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\* In this account of the death and burial of the Sieur de la Salle, I have followed the narrative of Father Anastase. — Le Clercq's *Etablissement*, &c., Tom. II. p. 340. — Joutel says that he expired instantly, and that "the body was stripped naked, dragged into the bushes, and left exposed to the ravenous wild beasts." — *Journal Historique*, p. 203. — But he related what was told to him by others, and wrote from recollection; whereas Anastase was present, and has described what he saw and performed; and, as his authority is unquestioned, the account given by him would seem to deserve the most credit.

It is impossible to determine the precise spot at which this tragedy occurred. It was several days' journey west of the Ceniz Indians, whose dwellings were on the River

heard by Joutel, Cavelier, and the others there, may be imagined. Attached and devoted as they had been to their commander, they had reason to suppose themselves destined to be the next victims of the murderers. Larcheveque assured Joutel, however, that if he said and did nothing to give further offence, he would be safe; and the same declaration was made to Cavelier. But the anguish they felt was not assuaged by the reflection, that they were now at the mercy of faithless and treacherous assassins, who, at any moment, in a fit of caprice, might perpetrate new crimes, as their passions or interests might dictate.

Duhaut assumed the command, and the confederates were for a time submissive to his orders. They seized upon all the effects of the *Sieur de la Salle*, and of those who had adhered to him, and then took up their line of march towards the villages of the *Cenis Indians*.

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Trinity. The place was probably on one of the streams flowing into the *Brazos*, from the east, and not far from that river; perhaps forty or fifty miles north of the present town of *Washington*. It could scarcely have been farther eastward, though the event has generally been supposed to have happened on a branch of the *Trinity*.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Contention between the Conspirators. — Five of La Salle's Party proceed to the Illinois, and thence to France. — The Chevalier de Tonty. — Error concerning a supposed Attempt of La Salle to find the Mines of St. Barbe. — Fate of the Colony at the Bay of St. Bernard. — Conclusion.*

AFTER a few days' march, they encamped not far from a Cenis village, and, as the provisions began to fail, Joutel, Liotot, Hiens, and Teissier, were sent forward with axes and knives to barter with the natives for corn and horses. They were successful in their trade, and went back with a good supply, except Joutel, who remained to collect a further stock. Among the Cenis he found three of the Frenchmen, who had deserted from the Sieur de la Salle on the former journey. One of them was named Ruter, a sailor of Brittany, and another was called Grollet. They had adopted the Indian costume, shaved their heads, painted their faces and bodies, decorated themselves with feathers, and in their appearance and manners could scarcely be distinguished from the savages. While their powder lasted, they had made themselves of

consequence in the wars, having killed many of the enemy ; but when this was gone, they were obliged to resort to bows and arrows, which they had learned to manage with adroitness.

While Joutel was employed for a week or two in collecting provisions, the company still remaining at the camp, Duhaut formed the design of returning to the Bay of St. Bernard, where he intended to build a vessel, and embark in it for the West Indies. This was a wild scheme, since there were neither carpenters nor materials for constructing such a vessel ; yet he insisted on executing it. Anastase, Cavelier, and Joutel were bent on going forward to the Illinois ; but they did not venture to reveal this project to Duhaut, not knowing what effect it might have upon his reckless and violent temper. Cavelier, in as gentle a manner as possible, told him that they were not willing to undertake the fatigues of this journey, but preferred to remain in the Ceniz villages, and asked him to leave with them some of the powder, axes, and other articles, by which they could obtain provisions. After consulting with his associates, he consented to this proposal, and said that, in case he should not succeed in building a boat, he would return and bring with him Father Zenobe ; and, if he should succeed, he would give them notice, and they might follow him to the Bay of St. Bernard.



This freak of good humor was more than they had reason to expect. Before long, Duhaut found out their project of going to the Illinois; and then he changed his mind, probably being convinced, upon reflection, of the folly of his own scheme: This change disconcerted the hopes of Joutel and his party, for they were anxious to be separated from the murderers. Their hopes were fulfilled in a way they did not anticipate. Dissensions had already sprung up among the assassins about the division of the effects, which terminated in a quarrel. This was the state of things at the end of April.

Hiens had been absent from the camp for some time, and when he returned, and understood that Duhaut had altered his plan, he refused his consent, and said it would be dangerous for them to go to the Illinois, where they might be arrested and punished under the authority of the French government. He demanded a share of all the goods that had been seized, and, when this demand was refused, Hiens, who had probably formed his design beforehand, drew a pistol and shot Duhaut, who staggered a few steps and fell dead. At the same instant, Ruter fired his musket upon Liotot, who was mortally wounded, but who survived a few hours, when Ruter put an end to his tortures by the discharge of a pistol. They next sought

Larcheveque, who was absent, and whom they likewise intended to kill; but they were diverted from their purpose by the intercessions of Anastase and Cavelier.

These new atrocities struck the adherents of La Salle with consternation and horror; but Hiens assured them that he had no intention to do them harm, and that they might be tranquil and easy on that score. They were now under his command, but he seems not to have exercised any severity, either to injure their persons or control their movements. He told them that he had engaged to join the natives in a war, and would fulfil his promise, and that they might remain in the villages till he returned. This purpose was executed. Hiens and his men went away, leaving them behind.

They stayed till he returned from the war, in which bloody battles had been fought. He then consented, though with reluctance, to let them depart. He furnished them with a good supply of axes, knives, powder, and balls, and with three horses. If they were thankful for this show of generosity, it was not without sharp feeling that they saw this conspirator and assassin parading among the Indians dressed in a scarlet coat embroidered with gold, which had belonged to the Sieur de la Salle, and which he was accustomed to wear on occasions of ceremony.

But it was not a time to yield to the claims of sensibility, or to indulge emotions, which nature might prompt, but which a stern policy bade them suppress.

The company now consisted of seven persons, Anastase, Cavelier the Priest, Cavelier the nephew, Joutel, De Marle, Teissier, and a young Parisian, named Barthelemy. They had six horses, and three Indian guides, who had been prevailed upon to go with them for a liberal reward.

To give the details of their journey would be little else than to repeat what has before been described. They left the Cenis villages late in the month of May, travelled over the former route as far as the Nassonis, and then, pursuing the same northeasterly course, passed through several tribes of Indians, among others the great nation of the Cadodaquios, who dwelt on the banks of the Red River. A melancholy accident happened before they reached this place. De Marle, while bathing in a river, was drowned. The natives were everywhere friendly, gave them provisions, and assisted them with guides. At length, on the 24th of July, as they approached a river, they beheld on the opposite side, to their inexpressible joy and surprise, a large cross, and a house of logs built after the French fashion. This house was near the junction of the Arkansas

River with the Mississippi, where the provident Tonty, true to his duty and his attachment, had posted six men, with the hope that they might be able in some way to communicate with the Sieur de la Salle. Two of them only, Couture and Delaunay, now remained; the other four had gone back to the Illinois.

As soon as these two men saw their countrymen, they fired a salute, crossed the river with canoes, and took them to their habitation. After a six months' march through a wilderness, a march filled with perils and the most painful incidents, we may well imagine that the travellers were rejoiced to meet once more the tokens of human sympathy, as well as to see the waters of the Mississippi, so long the object of their ardent desire, now rolling placidly before their eyes. Although they were many hundred miles from the nearest footprints of civilization, they seemed to be on the threshold of home. They rested here six days, and were entertained by the Arkansas with the ceremonies usual on receiving strangers bearing the calumet of peace. Moreover, these savages had seen La Salle; his renown as a great captain was high among them; and, not yet informed of his death, they bestowed on his companions some portion of the respect entertained for their leader.

The Parisian youth Barthelemy, exhausted by



the toils he had endured, was allowed to stay, at his own request, with Couture and Delaunay. The company was thus reduced to five persons. After making presents to the chiefs, procuring Indian guides, and bartering some of their horses for a canoe, they took leave of their hospitable friends, and began the wearisome labor of ascending the Mississippi. Their progress was slow, but at the end of two months they entered the Illinois River, and, on the 14th of September, landed at the foot of the high rock on which stood the Fort of St. Louis.\*

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\* In this part of the narrative, Father Anastase makes a passing remark upon the voyage of Marquette and Joliet. He endeavors to throw a shade of discredit upon Marquette's relation, and says it did not see the light till after La Salle's discovery. This is a mistake, for it was published in 1681, the year before La Salle descended the Mississippi. He affirms, moreover, that these voyagers did not go more than thirty or forty leagues below the mouth of the Illinois. He gives no reason for this assertion, and it may safely be said that there is no composition of the narrative kind, which bears stronger internal marks of truth, than that of Marquette. His map, also, which was published at the same time, is strikingly correct in the position of the great rivers, and in the latitudes as far south as the Arkansas, which was the limit of his voyage. Anastase was a Recollect, and Marquette a Jesuit; and as we have seen, in the case of Charlevoix, that the Jesuits sometimes looked through dark glasses upon the labors and writings of their Franciscan brethren, so in this instance, perhaps, it is but fair to suppose that the compliment was returned.



The Chevalier de Tonty, governor of the fort and of the Illinois country, was absent in a war against the Iroquois ; but they were greeted with cordiality and joy by the Sieur de Bellefontaine, who commanded in his absence. Boisrondet, whom the reader will recollect as having been several times mentioned before, was likewise in the fort, and devotedly attached to the interests of the Sieur de la Salle. It was the intention of Cavelier, Joutel, and Anastase, to proceed immediately to Quebec, and thence to France. They prepared for their journey in a few days. Boisrondet likewise proposed to go with them, and offered them a passage in his canoe. They went to Chicago, and set off upon the lake, but were soon discouraged by the tempestuous weather and lateness of the season, and returned to Fort St. Louis, where they spent the winter.

They had not been long there, when the Chevalier de Tonty, having closed the Iroquois campaign, came to them at the fort. It may easily be imagined with what delight and eager anticipations he now met those, who could give him intelligence of his long-lost friend. But, for some strange reason not well explained, Cavelier and his companions had agreed to conceal his brother's death till they should arrive in France. They had told it to Couture, but charged him to keep it a profound secret. They were

obliged to dissemble, therefore, with Tonty, and with everybody else, who besieged them with anxious inquiries upon this subject. They related the particulars of the voyage, and of the disasters and adventures at the Bay of St. Bernard, leaving the impression, at the same time, that La Salle was still there and alive. The only apology hinted at by Anastase and Joutel for this extraordinary conduct, is, that they regarded it a duty first to communicate the news to the court of France. This is so clearly a subterfuge, that it is not worthy of a moment's consideration. Charlevoix probably suggests the true reason, which was, that they wished to make use of the credit of La Salle to procure the means for enabling them to pursue their journey. But this will not account for their silence at Quebec, when their journey was at an end. Cavelier presented a sealed letter to Tonty, purporting to be written by the *Sieur de la Salle*, and signed by him, in which he requested Tonty to furnish his brother with money or goods. Unsuspicious, and as ready to comply with the wishes as to obey the commands of his friend, he generously supplied the bearer, as Joutel relates, with the value of four thousand livres in furs, a canoe, and other effects, for which Cavelier went through the ceremony of giving him a receipt. The letter may have been written before La

Salle's death ; but was it just or honorable now to pass it off for such a purpose ? These transactions, apparently so indefensible, cannot be explained, and must be left to the reader's reflection.

Cavelier and his companions left Fort St. Louis early in the spring of 1688 ; but they lingered on the way, and did not reach Quebec till after the middle of August, when they sailed for France, and landed at Rochelle on the 9th of October, bearing with them the first intelligence to the French court and nation of the death of the *Sieur de la Salle*, more than a year and a half after this tragical event had occurred.

In conformity to his orders from La Salle and the court of France, Tonty had descended the Mississippi, with forty men, to its mouth, where he expected to meet his commander. Disappointed in his expectation, he sent out canoes along the coast, both to the east and west of the Mississippi, in search of the vessels. These not being found, he returned up the river to the Illinois, stopping at the Arkansas, and establishing there the post before mentioned.\*

After this period, little is known of the Cheva-

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\* When Iberville sailed into the Mississippi, fourteen years afterwards, a letter was put into his hands, which had been written by the Chevalier de Tonty, and which was then

ier de Tonty. He was informed of La Salle's death by Couture, who came up to Fort St. Louis some time after the departure of Cavelier. His surprise and chagrin need not be described. The next year, 1689, he put himself at the head of an expedition to go and rescue the unfortunate people left at the Bay of St. Bernard. He advanced to the country of the Cenis Indians, and, as he says, approached within seven days' march

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procured from an Indian chief. It was directed to *M. de la Salle, Governor of Louisiana*, and its contents were as follows.

"At the village of the Quinipissas, 20th of April, 1685. Sir; Having found the column, on which you had placed the arms of France, overthrown by the driftwood floated thither by the tide, I caused a new one to be erected, about seven leagues from the sea, where I left a letter suspended from a tree. — All the nations have sung the calumet. These people fear us extremely, since your attack upon their village. I close by saying, that it gives me great uneasiness to be obliged to return under the misfortune of not having found you. Two canoes have examined the coast thirty leagues towards Mexico, and twenty-five towards Florida."

This letter is published by Charlevoix. He adds that the Indians, whom Tonty calls Quinipissas, were the same as the Bayagoulas and Mongoulachas. — *Histoire*, Liv. XVIII. — The above date, as given by Charlevoix, is erroneous in regard to the year, for Tonty says in his *Petition*, that he went down the Mississippi in 1686; and he must of course have been there about the time that La Salle was beginning his first journey to the Illinois.

of the Spaniards, when some of his men abandoned him, and he was obliged to return. He was absent ten months. If Cavelier and Joutel had been open and frank with him, and had told the whole truth when they first arrived, and thus enabled him to form his plan immediately, it is more than probable that his zeal and enterprise, prompted as they were by the noblest motives of humanity, would have been crowned with success. For several years, he held the chief command in the Illinois country, by a commission from the king, his head-quarters being at Fort St. Louis. He joined Iberville at the mouth of the Mississippi about the year 1700, and two years afterwards was employed on a mission to the Chickasaws. His route from Mobile to the Chickasaw nation is delineated in some of the old maps. Neither his subsequent services nor the time of his death are known.\*

All the facts that can be ascertained, concerning the Chevalier de Tonty, are such as give a highly favorable impression of his character, both as an officer and a man. His constancy, and his steady devotion to La Salle, are marked not only

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\* In the *Petition* of the Chevalier de Tonty to the Count de Pontchartrain, some of the events of his life are narrated. See APPENDIX, No. V.—The Sieur de Tonty, a captain in the army, who commanded for some time at Detroit, was his brother.



by a strict obedience to orders, but by a faithful friendship and chivalrous generosity. His courage and address were strikingly exhibited in his intercourse with the Indians, as well in war as in peace; but his acts were performed where there were few to observe and fewer to record them. Hence it is, that historians have done him but partial justice. And it is most unfortunate, that the narrative from his own pen, originally written, as his character justifies us in believing, with fidelity and truth, should have been so mutilated and deformed by some mischievous hand, as to render it a reproach to his name, rather than what it might have been, a testimony to his merits, and an honorable monument to his memory.

One censure has been cast upon the *Sieur de la Salle*, of a very grave nature, which deserves a special notice. *Charlevoix* says, "It is certain that *M. de la Salle*, finding himself at the Bay of *St. Bernard*, and having soon discovered that he was at the westward of the river for which he was searching, might, if he had entertained no other design than that of finding the river, have procured guides among the *Cenis Indians*, during his first journey, as *Joutel* did afterwards; but he had a strong desire to go towards the *Spaniards*, to obtain a knowledge of the

Mines of St. Barbe.”\* From this passage of Charlevoix, and one or two others, it is evident that he supposed La Salle to have left his forlorn colony in a state of desolation and distress, and to have strolled away to the borders of New Mexico, in search of these chimerical mines. Other writers have been betrayed by him into the same belief. But this idea is entirely erroneous, as the reader cannot but be convinced from the details of his journeys, which have been above related.

Joutel likewise observes, speaking of La Salle's first journey from the Bay of St. Bernard, that “he penetrated far into the country, inclining towards the northern parts of Mexico.”† But we must remember, that Joutel was not with him during this journey, and does not pretend to describe it. The only person, who wrote an account of it, was Father Anastase, and he was one of the party. He says expressly, and more than once, that, when they left the fort, their route was northeast, and afterwards more easterly; and they passed in this direction a long way beyond the Cenis villages towards the Red River. And Joutel himself informs us, that the second journey was over the same track as the first, and

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\* *Histoire de Nouvelle France*, Liv. XIII.

† *Journal Historique*, p. 150.

that La Salle was killed at a place where he had been while on the first journey.

Hennepin tells us, that, before the *Sieur de la Salle* began his discoveries, he used to talk to him in Canada of these imaginary Mines of *St. Barbe*, and hoped that he should find them at some future day. This may be true, for the same chimera at that time and afterwards troubled the dreams of many persons in France. Near the close of the volume, containing the English translation of Hennepin, is an absurd story by an unknown hand, purporting to be a description of *La Salle's* last voyage and death. The writer says, that he proposed to his men to go with him from the coast to the Mines of *St. Barbe*, where they would find a "rich and easy booty;" that some approved and others rejected this proposition, till they fell into a quarrel, and came to blows; and that the *Sieur de la Salle* was killed in the fray.

From these suggestions and rumors, and others of a similar kind, it seems to have at length been regarded as an historical fact, that he really engaged in this adventure. No authentic account of his death was published, till that of *Le Clercq*, four years after the event. Meantime *La Salle* had enemies enough in Canada, and in France after the return of *Beaujeu* with his vessel, to circulate any tales that might be told to his dis-

advantage. Scarcely a fact connected with his discoveries, however, is more demonstrable, than that he never went a day's journey from the Bay of St. Bernard towards Mexico, and that all his travels were eastward, in the direction of the Mississippi or of the Illinois. Hence it is impossible that he should have gone in search of the Mines of St. Barbe, which were supposed to exist somewhere in the northern parts of Mexico; nor is there any creditable authority of early date for believing, that he entertained for a moment such a design after he landed.

The reader may be curious to know the fate of the unhappy colonists left at the fort. The story, as related by Charlevoix, is brief and sad. When the neighboring Indians, whom he calls Clamoets, heard of the *Sieur de la Salle's* death, and of the dispersion of his men, they made an attack on the fort, and massacred all that were in it, except three sons and a daughter of M. Talon, and a young Frenchman named Eustache de Breman. These were spared, and led into captivity. Their tender age seems to have been their shield of protection. Meantime the Spaniards of New Mexico, alarmed at the movements of La Salle, and hearing that Frenchmen had penetrated to the Cenis Indians, despatched a strong military force to that nation, where they took Larcheveque and Grollet prisoners. Another party found Ta-



lon and Munier, who, having acquired the language of the natives, were prevailed upon to remain there and assist the Spanish missionaries as interpreters. Young Talon informed the Spaniards of the captivity of his brothers and sister among the Clamoets. Two of the brothers, the sister, and Breman, were rescued some time after, and conducted to the city of Mexico, where they were taken into the service of the viceroy.

Larcheveque and Grollet were first sent to Spain, and confined in prison. They were next transported to New Mexico, and, it is supposed, were condemned to work in the mines. The two brothers, Talon, entered the Spanish navy, and, the vessel in which they served having been captured by the French, they were thus restored to their country. The youngest brother, and the sister, who were retained in the service of the viceroy, went with him to Spain. Nothing further is known of Breman, or of those who remained with the Ceniz Indians. It does not appear, that the French government took any measures to reclaim the prisoners, although they had gone upon the enterprise under the authority of the court. Political reasons may have prevented such a step. No plan was put in execution for saving the unfortunate people at the fort; and the news of their disastrous situation, after the death of their commander, came



so late to France, that an attempt for this object would have been unavailing, if it had been made.

In estimating the character, the acts, and personal qualities of La Salle, we should not forget, that our judgment is to be formed wholly from the relations of others, who knew little of his plans or his thoughts, and who were not all of them his friends. Not a single paper from his own hand, not so much as a private letter or a fragment of his official correspondence, has ever been published, or even consulted by the writers on whose authority alone we must rely for the history of the transactions in which he was concerned. All the original sources of information, which now exist, are mere narratives, the compositions of men who related passing events, and saw the outside only, but who had neither the means of knowing nor the intelligence to comprehend the nature and extent of his designs, or the complicated difficulties with which they were executed. The journal of Joutel, which has been regarded as the best of these, was written, as the author himself confesses, mostly from recollection, and was published twenty-six years after the death of La Salle. It would be in vain to search, in materials of this kind, for the secret springs of his bold conceptions, his motives and ultimate aims, which, if

they had been unfolded and explained by himself, would undoubtedly place him in a very different light before the world. Under such circumstances, it would be wrong to judge harshly.

From the preceding narrative it is obvious, that he possessed remarkable qualities, which fitted him for great undertakings; although it must be conceded, that he was deficient in others scarcely less essential to success. He was ignorant of the art of governing men, or rather of bending them to his purpose. He could neither humor their foibles, nor lead them by a silken cord, nor attach them heartily to his interests; and he seems never to have been aware that enterprises like those in which he was engaged, could not be accomplished without the willing support and coöperating agency of others, who, although they acted in a subordinate capacity, would claim some degree of respect and deference for their opinions. Saturnine in his temperament, reserved in his communications, he asked counsel of no one; and there was a certain hardness in his manners, a tone of lofty self-reliance, which, although it might command the obedience of his followers, was not likely to gain their hearty good will. These faults were probably inherent in the constitution of his mind; but, whatever may have been their origin, they were fatal in their consequences.

On the other hand, his capacity for large designs, and for devising the methods and procuring the resources to carry them forward, has few parallels among the most eminent discoverers. He has been called the Columbus of his age; and if his success had been equal to his ability and the compass of his plans, this distinction might justly be awarded to him. As in great battles, so in enterprises of this kind, success crowns the commander with laurels, defeat covers him with disgrace, and perhaps draws upon him the obloquy of the world, although he may have fought as bravely and manœuvred as adroitly in one case as the other. Fortune turns the scale, and baffles the efforts of human skill and prowess. In some of the higher attributes of character, such as personal courage and endurance, undaunted resolution, patience under trials, and perseverance in contending with obstacles and struggling through embarrassments that might appal the stoutest heart, no man surpassed the Sieur de la Salle. Not a hint appears in any writer, that has come under notice, which casts a shade upon his integrity or honor. Cool and intrepid at all times, never yielding for a moment to despair, or even to despondency, he bore the heavy burden of his calamities manfully to the end, and his hopes expired only with his last breath. To him must be mainly ascribed the

discovery of the vast regions of the Mississippi Valley, and the subsequent occupation and settlement of them by the French; and his name justly holds a prominent place among those which adorn the history of civilization in the new world.

## APPENDIX.

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### No. I.

#### LETTERS PATENT

GRANTED BY THE KING OF FRANCE TO THE SIEUR  
DE LA SALLE, ON THE 12TH OF MAY, 1678.

#### TRANSLATION.

LOUIS, by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre. To our dear and well-beloved Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, greeting.

We have received with favor the very humble petition, which has been presented to us in your name, to permit you to endeavor to discover the western part of our country of New France; and we have consented to this proposal the more willingly, because there is nothing we have more at heart than the discovery of this country, through which it is probable that a passage may be found to Mexico; and because your diligence in clearing the lands which we granted to you by the decree of our council of the 13th of May, 1675, and, by Letters Patent of the same date, to form habitations upon the said lands, and to put Fort Frontenac in a good state of defence,



the seigniory and government whereof we likewise granted to you, affords us every reason to hope that you will succeed to our satisfaction, and to the advantage of our subjects of the said country.

For these reasons, and others thereunto moving us, we have permitted, and do hereby permit you, by these presents, signed by our hand, to endeavor to discover the western part of our country of New France, and, for the execution of this enterprise, to construct forts wherever you shall deem it necessary; which it is our will that you shall hold on the same terms and conditions as Fort Frontenac, agreeably and conformably to our said Letters Patent of the 13th of May, 1675, which we have confirmed, as far as is needful, and hereby confirm by these presents. And it is our pleasure that they be executed according to their form and tenor.

To accomplish this, and everything above mentioned, we give you full powers; on condition, however, that you shall finish this enterprise within five years, in default of which these presents shall be void and of none effect; that you carry on no trade whatever with the savages called Outaouacs, and others who bring their beaver skins and other peltries to Montreal; and that the whole shall be done at your expense, and that of your company, to which we have granted the privilege of the trade in buffalo skins. And we call on the Sieur de Frontenac, our Governor and Lieutenant-General, and on the Sieur du Chesneau, Intendant of Justice, Police, and Finance, and on the officers who compose the supreme

council in the said country, to affix their signatures to these presents; for such is our pleasure. Given at St. Germain en Laye, this 12th day of May, 1678, and of our reign the thirty-fifth.

Signed,

LOUIS.

And lower down,

By the King,

COLBERT.

And sealed with the great seal of yellow wax.

The act of the Governor, attached to these presents, is dated the 5th of November, 1678.

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## No. II.

### MEMOIR

#### CONCERNING LOUISIANA, ASCRIBED TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

A VOLUME was published at Paris, in the year 1802, containing a *Mémoire historique et politique sur la Louisiane*, the authorship of which is ascribed, by the anonymous editor, to the Count de Vergennes, and it has since passed under his name. The reasons assigned by the editor for supposing it to have been written by the Count de Vergennes, are, that "many phrases contained in the introduction addressed to the King, the discovery of the Memoir among his papers with his arms stamped upon it, the

style, the thoughts, all go to prove that he was the author." Whatever force there may be in these reasons, it is certain that the substance of the Memoir itself must utterly destroy their weight.

A large part of the Memoir is devoted to an historical account of Louisiana, from the time of its first settlement. The accuracy or value of this account we need not stop to examine. The main purpose of the writer is to suggest a scheme for the recovery of the lost dominion of France in North America.

By the treaty of 1763, France had ceded to Great Britain the whole of Canada, and all its dependencies, except the small islands of St. Pierre and Miquilon, which were retained as fishing grounds, and had renounced her former pretensions to Nova Scotia. By another treaty she had ceded to Spain the whole of Louisiana. Now, it is the project of the writer of this Memoir, that Spain shall give back Louisiana, and that Great Britain shall restore Canada; and, as far as can be discovered, these cessions were to be considered as mere acts of grace, since no equivalents are proposed. It is true, he recommends that France should *cede* to Great Britain the northern parts of New York, which she never possessed, and the territory between the Allegany Mountains and the Ohio River, which she likewise never possessed, and which, with the whole country as far as the Mississippi, she had confirmed to Great Britain by the treaty of 1763. Can any one believe, that such crude reveries ever entered the head of the Count de Vergennes, or of any other statesman?

The Memoir bears no date, but internal evidence shows it to have been written in 1776, or the year following. At this time it is well known that the Count de Vergennes, so far from seeking to negotiate cessions of territory, was expecting and urging a war between France and Great Britain, and was at the head of the party, which proposed, at an early day, that France should join the United States in their struggle for independence. In the month of August, 1776, he read a memoir to the King in Council, the object of which was to prove that the honor and interest of France required the government to espouse the cause of the Americans, and to bring on a war with England. It is, moreover, well known that it was not the policy of the Count de Vergennes, nor of the French court, even after the treaty of alliance with the United States, to recover Canada. A contrary policy was pursued, both in principle and practice, during the whole war. This fact is confirmed by the official correspondence of the Count de Vergennes. Aside from the absurdity of such a project, therefore, as that of procuring a cession of Louisiana and Canada without equivalents, or even with such equivalents as France could give, an absurdity of which the Count de Vergennes could certainly never have been guilty, the scheme itself of recovering Canada on any terms is at variance with all his public acts at the time, and with his policy, as explained in his communications to the court, and in his correspondence on American affairs.

## No. III.

## PARALLEL PASSAGES

FROM LE CLERCQ AND HENNEPIN, SHOWING THE  
SOURCES OF HENNEPIN'S ACCOUNT OF A VOYAGE  
DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI.

It has been stated in the text, that Hennepin's description of a voyage made by him down the Mississippi is a fabrication, and that he drew his materials from the book published by Le Clercq, six years before the publication of Hennepin's work containing an account of his pretended discovery of the mouth of that river. As a proof of this fact, the following extracts are selected from these two books. The references are to Le Clercq's *Etablissement de la Foy*, Paris, 1691; and to the Amsterdam edition of Hennepin's *Nouvelle Découverte*, published in 1698. The orthography and punctuation are exactly copied. The first extract relates to the Akansas Indians.

LE CLERCQ. "Ces Sauvages ne ressemblent pas à ceux du Nord qui sont tous d'une humeur triste & severe. Ceux-cy sont beaucoup mieux faits, honnestes, liberaux, & d'une humeur gaye, la jeunesse même est si modeste, que quoy qu'ils eussent une forte envie devoir le sieur de la Salle, ils se tenoient sans bruit à la porte, & sans oser y entrer. Nous y vîmes grand nombre de poules domestiques, des troupeaux de poullets d'Indes; & d'Outardes familiers, diverses sortes de fruits, des pesches déjà formées sur les arbres, quoy qu'on ne fût encore qu'au commencement de Mars." Tome II. p. 224



HENNEPIN. " Ces Sauvages sont fort differens de ceux du Nord, qui ont ordinairement l'humeur triste, morne, & severe. Ceux-ci sont beaucoup mieux faits, honnestes, liberaux, & fort gais. Leur jeunes gens sont si modestes, qu'ils n'oseroient parler devant les Vieillards, à moins qu'on ne les interroge. Nous aperçumes parmi ces peuples des poules domestiques, des poules d'Inde en grand nombre, & des Outardes apprivoisées, comme les Oyes en Europe. Leurs Arbres commençoient déjà à montrer leurs fruits, comme les pesches, & autres fruits de cette nature." p. 259.

The following extract relates to the country of the Taensas, on the bank of the river below the Akansas. It is to be observed, that the Recollect represents his voyage to have occurred in the same season of the year as that of the Sieur de la Salle, that is, in the month of March, so that vegetation, fruits, and the scenery of nature, would be in the same condition, and have the same appearance.

LE CLERCQ. " Tout ce païs est garni de Palmiers, de Lauriers de deux sortes, de Pruniers, de Peschers, de Meuriers, de Pommiers, de Poiriers de toutes sortes d'especes. Il y a aussi des Noyers de cinq ou six sortes, dont quelques-uns portent des noix d'une grosseur extraordinaire. L'on nous fit goûter de plusieurs natures de fruits secs que nous trouvâmes fort bons, & gros, l'on y voit aussi de beaucoup d'autres especes d'arbres fruitiers dont je n'ai point vû en Europe, la saison trop peu avancée ne nous permit pas d'en reconnoître les fruits, nous y remarquâmes des vignes qui avoient passées leur fleur, au reste l'esprit & l'humeur de ces peuples nous parût

docile, & traitable, & même capable de raison”  
Tome II. p. 229.

HENNEPIN. “Ce pays-là est rempli de palmiers, de lauriers sauvages, & de plusieurs autres Arbres qui sont semblables aux nôtres de l’Europe, comme de pruniers, de meuriers, de pêcheurs, de poiriers, de pomiers de toutes especes. Il y a de cinq ou six sortes de noiërs, dont les noix sont d’une grosseur extraordinaire. Ils ont aussi plusieurs fruits secs, qui sont fort gros, & que nous trouvâmes fort bons. Il y a encore plusieurs Arbres fruitiers, que nous n’avons point en Europe. Mais la saison étoit alors trop peu avancée pour en reconnoître le fruit: Nous y vîmes des vignes, qui étoient prestes à fleurir. En un mot l’esprit & l’humeur de ce peuple nous parurent fort agreables. Ils sont dociles, traitables, & capables de raison.” p. 264.

We now approach the mouth of the river. It is remarkable that a drum should be heard, and that fishermen and dead bodies should be seen by the Recollect, in the same places in which they were heard and seen by La Salle two years afterwards.

LE CLERCQ. “Après avoir navigé quarante lieuës, nous aperçûmes des pescheurs sur le bord du Fleuve qui prirent la fuite & aussi-tost après l’on entendit des Sasacoüest, c’est-à-dire des cris de guerre, & battre le Tambour, c’étoit la Nation des Quinipissa . . . . . Nous entrâmes dans un Village des Tangibao qui avoit esté sacagé & pillé tout recemment, nous y trouvâmes trois cabannes remplies d’hommes morts depuis environ 15. ou 16. jours. Enfin après une navigation d’environ 40. lieuës, nous arrivâmes le 6. Avril à une

pointe où le Fleuve se divisoit en trois chenaux . . . . . Ces trois chenaux estoient beaux & profonds, l'eau estoit Somate au bout de deux lieuës nous la trouvâmes tout-à-fait sallée, & avançans toûjours, nous decouvriions la pleine Mer." Tome II. p. 235.

HENNEPIN. "Après avoir encore navigé pendant près de trente cinq ou quarante lieües, nous apperçûmes deux pêcheurs sur la rive du Fleuve, lesquels prirent la fuite. Quelque temps après nous entendîmes quelques cris de guerre, & selon toutes les apparences le bourdonnement de quelque tambour. Nous apprîmes depuis, que c'étoit la Nation de Quinipissa . . . . . Nous débarquâmes fort tard dans un Village sur le bord du Fleuve. On nous a dit depuis, que c'étoit la Nation des *Tangibao*. Il y a tous les sujets du monde de croire, que ces derniers avoient été saccagez par leurs Ennemis. Nous trouvâmes dans leurs Cabannes dix hommes tuez à coup de flèches . . . . . Nous embarquâmes à la petite pointe du jour & après une navigation qui fut encore plus longue que celle du jour precedent, nous arrivâmes à une pointe, où le Fleuve se divise en trois Canaux. Nous passâmes en diligence par celui du milieu, qui étoit tres-beau & fort profond; L'eau y étoit *Somache*, où à demi salée & trois ou quatre lieües plus avant nous la trouvâmes entierement salée. Poussant encore un peu plus avant nous decouvriîmes la Mer." p. 270.

LE CLERCQ. "Cette embouchure est éloignée d'environ 30 lieuës de Rio Brave, de 60. de Rio, de Palmas & de 90, ou 100 lieuës de Rio de Panuco où est la plus prochaine habitation des Espagnols sur la côte. Nous estimions la Baye du Saint Esprit au

Nord-est de nostre embouchure; nous sommes toujours allez depuis la riviere des Illinois au Sud, & Sud Oüest, le Fleuve serpente un peu, conserve jusques à la Mer sa largeur de près d'un quart de lieuë, est fort profond par tout sans aucun banc, ny rien qui empesche la navigation, quoy que l'on aye publié au contraire. On estime ce Fleuve de huit cens lieuës de profondeur, nous en avons fait pour le moins trois cens cinquante depuis l'embouchure de la riviere de Seignelay." Tome II. p. 238.

HENNEPIN. " Cette embouchure de Meschasiipi est éloignée d'environ trente lieües de *Rio bravo*, de soixante lieües de Palmas, de 80. ou 100. lieües de *Rio de Panuco* sur la côte la plus prochaine des habitations des Espagnols. Suivant cela nous avons jugé par le moien de la boussole, qui nous a toujours été fort nécessaire pendant toute nôtre Découverte, que la Baye du St. Esprit étoit au Nord-Est de cette embouchure. Pendant toute nôtre route depuis l'embouchure de la Riviere des Illinois, qui entre dans Meschasiipi, nous avons presque toujours navigé au Sud, & au Sud-Oüest jusques à la Mer. Ce Fleuve serpente en plusieurs endroits, & il est presque par tout d'une lieüe de largeur. Il est fort profond, & n'a point de bancs de fable. Rien n'en empêche la navigation, & les Navires même les plus considerables peuvent y entrer sans peine. On estime, que ce Fleuve a plus de huit cent lieües d'étendue dans les terres depuis sa Source jusques à la Mer, en y comprenant les détours, qu'il fait en serpentant. Son embouchure est à plus de trois cent quarante lieües de celle de la Riviere des Illinois." p. 274.



In returning up the river, the Recollect draws as copiously from the same source. But we need not follow him further. One or two extracts more will show, that he relied also on Le Clercq for his general descriptions.

LE CLERCQ. “Quand on est arrivé 20, ou 30 lieues au dessous des Maroa, les bordages sont pleins de cannes jusques à la Mer, à la reserve de 15 ou 20 endroits, où il y a de fort jolis côteaux & des débarquemens commodes & spatieux, l'inondation ne s'étend pas bien loin, & derriere ces bordages noyez l'on decouvre les plus beaux païs du monde. Nos chasseurs François & Sauvages en estoient charmez. L'espace de 200 lieues au moins en longueur, & autant en largeur, comme l'on nous en a asseuré, sont de vastes campagnes de tres-bonnes terres bordées par endroits de côteaux tres-agreables, de bois de haute futaye, de plusieurs bocages où l'on peut aller à cheval, tant les chemins sont nets, & nullement embarrassez, ces petites forests bordent de même les rivieres qui coupent ces campagnes en divers lieux, & sont fort poissonneuses, les Crocodils y sont dangereux, si bien qu'on n'oseroit s'exposer en de certains endroits, ny même sortir sa main hors du Canot. Les Sauvages nous ont dit que ces animaux entraînoient souvent de leurs gens, quand ils pouvoient les attraper par quelque endroit. Les Campagnes sont pleines de toutes sortes de gibiers, de bœufs sauvages, cerfs, biches, chevreüils, ours, poulles d'Inde, perdris, perroquets, cailles, bécasses, tourtes, pigeons ramiers, il y a aussi des Castors, des Loutres, des Martres, des



chats Sauvages, jusques à 100. lieües au dessous des Maroa." Tome II. p. 249.

HENNEPIN. "Quand on est arrivé a 20. ou 30. lieües au dessous des *Maroa*, les bords de ce Fleuve Meschasipi sont pleins de cannes jusques à la Mer. On trouve cependant environ trente ou quarante endroits, où il y a de tres beaux côteaux avec des débarquements commodes & spatieux. L'inondation du Fleuve ne s'étend pas bien loin, & derriere ces bords noïez, on découvre les plus beaux pays du monde pendant la longuer de deux cens lieües. Nous ne pouvions nous lasser de les admirer. On nous a assuré, qu'en largeur ce sont de vastes Campagnes, où on trouve des terres admirables bordées de fois à autre par des côteaux extremement agreables, par des bois de haute fûtaie, & par plusieurs bocages, où l'on peut aller commodément à cheval, par ce que les chemins sont fort nets, & qu'on n'y trouve aucun embarras. Ces petites forêts bordent tout de même les Rivieres, qui coupent ces Campagnes en divers lieux, & qui sont fort abondantes en Poisson, de même que le Fleuve Meschasipi. Au reste les Crocodiles y sont fort à craindre, quand on se neglige. Les Sauvages disent, qu'ils entraînent par fois ceux de leurs gens, qu'ils peuvent surprendre. Cependant cela arrive assez rarement, car après tout il n'y a point d'animal, quelque feroce qu'il soit, qui ne craigne l'homme. Les Campagnes de ces vastes pays sont pleines de toute sorte de gibier & de Venaison. On y trouve des Taureaux Sauvages, des Cerfs, des Chevreüils, des Ours, des poules d'Inde, des perdrix, des Cailles, des perroquets, des bécasses, des Tourterelles,

des pigeons ramiers, des Castors, des Loutres, des Martres, & des Cats suavages, pendant plus de cent cinquante lieües." p. 295.

We will close our extracts with a description of the opossum, an American animal, which was then a novelty to the European travellers.

LE CLERCQ. "Il y a un autre petit animal semblable à un rat mais aussi gros qu'un chat qui a le poil argenté meslé de noir, sa queuë est sans poil grosse comme un grös doigt & environ d'un pied de longueur, avec laquelle il se suspend quand il est aux branches des arbres il a une espece de sac sous le ventre où il porte ses petits quand on le poursuit." Tome II. p. 253.

HENNEPIN. "Il y a un petit animal, dont j'ay déjà fait mention en passant, qui est assez semblable à un Rat pour la figure. Il est aussi gros qu'un chat, & a le poil argenté, meslé de noir. Sa queüe est sans poil grosse comme un bon doit, environ d'un pied de longueur, de laquelle il se sert pour se pendre aux branches d'Arbres. Il a sous le ventre une espece de Sac, dans lequel il porte ses petits, quand on le poursuit." p. 297.

In addition to the account of his pretended voyage up and down the Mississippi River, Hennepin devotes nearly four chapters of his work to a description of the country along its banks, the rivers flowing into it, the manners of the inhabitants, productions of the soil, animals, mines of lead and coal, and other natural objects, which he likewise copies in many parts from the same author. By the above references, the reader may easily pursue the parallel.

## No. IV.

## PROCÈS VERBAL

OF THE TAKING POSSESSION OF LOUISIANA, AT THE MOUTH OF THE MISSISSIPPI, BY THE SIEUR DE LA SALLE, ON THE 9TH OF APRIL, 1682.\*

JAKUES DE LA METAIRIE, Notary of Fort Frontenac in New France, commissioned to exercise the said function of Notary during the voyage to Louisiana in North America by M. de la Salle, Governor of Fort Frontenac for the King, and commandant of the said Discovery by the commission of his Majesty given at St. Germain, on the 12th of May, 1678.

To all those to whom these presents shall come, greeting ; — Know, that, having been requested by the said Sieur de la Salle to deliver to him an act, signed by us and by the witnesses therein named, of possession by him taken of the country of Louisiana, near the three mouths of the River Colbert, in the Gulf of Mexico, on the 9th of April, 1682.

In the name of the most high, mighty, invincible, and victorious Prince, Louis the Great, by the Grace of God, King of France and of Navarre, Fourteenth

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\* This curious and important historical document has never been printed. The translation here given is made from the original, contained in the archives of the Marine Department at Paris. The proper names remain precisely as they are found in the manuscript, although the orthography of several of them is different from that which was afterwards adopted.

of that name, and of his heirs, and the successor of his crown, we, the aforesaid Notary, have delivered the said act to the said Sieur de la Salle, the tenor whereof follows.

On the 27th of December, 1681, M. de la Salle departed on foot to join M. de Tonty, who had preceded him with his followers and all his equipage forty leagues into the Miamis country, where the ice on the River Chekagou, in the country of the Mascoutens, had arrested his progress, and where, when the ice became stronger, they used sledges to drag the baggage, the canoes, and a wounded Frenchman, through the whole length of this river, and on the Illinois, a distance of seventy leagues.

At length, all the French being together, on the 25th of January, 1682, we came to Pimiteoui. From that place, the river being frozen only in some parts, we continued our route to the River Colbert, sixty leagues, or thereabouts, from Pimiteoui, and ninety leagues, or thereabouts, from the village of the Illinois. We reached the banks of the River Colbert on the 6th of January, and remained there until the 13th, waiting for the savages, whose progress had been impeded by the ice. On the 13th, all having assembled, we renewed our voyage, being twenty-two French, carrying arms, accompanied by the Reverend Father Zenobe Membré, one of the Recollect Missionaries, and followed by eighteen New England savages, and several women, Ilgonquines, Otchipoises, and Huronnes.

On the 14th, we arrived at the village of Maroa, consisting of a hundred cabins, without inhabitants.



Proceeding about a hundred leagues down the River Colbert, we went ashore to hunt on the 26th of February. A Frenchman was lost in the woods, and it was reported to M. de la Salle, that a large number of savages had been seen in the vicinity. Thinking that they might have seized the Frenchman, and in order to observe these savages, he marched through the woods during two days, but without finding them, because they had all been frightened by the guns which they had heard, and had fled.

Returning to camp, he sent in every direction French and savages on the search, with orders, if they fell in with savages, to take them alive without injury, that he might gain from them intelligence of this Frenchman. Gabriel Barbié, with two savages, having met five of the Chikacha nation, captured two of them. They were received with all possible kindness, and, after he had explained to them that he was anxious about a Frenchman who had been lost, and that he only detained them that he might rescue him from their hands, if he was really among them, and afterwards make with them an advantageous peace, (the French doing good to everybody,) they assured him that they had not seen the man whom we sought, but that peace would be received with the greatest satisfaction. Presents were then given to them, and, as they had signified that one of their villages was not more than half a day's journey distant, M. de la Salle set out the next day to go thither; but, after travelling till night, and having remarked that they often contradicted themselves in their discourse, he declined going farther, without



more provisions. Having pressed them to tell the truth, they confessed that it was yet four days' journey to their villages; and, perceiving that M. de la Salle was angry at having been deceived, they proposed that one of them should remain with him, while the other carried the news to the village, whence the elders would come and join them four days' journey below that place. The said Sieur de la Salle returned to the camp with one of these Chikachas; and the Frenchman, whom we sought, having been found, he continued his voyage, and passed the river of the Chepntias, and the village of the Metsigameas. The fog, which was very thick, prevented his finding the passage which led to the rendezvous proposed by the Chikachas.

On the 12th of March, we arrived at the Kapaha village of Akansa. Having established a peace there, and taken possession, we passed, on the 15th, another of their villages, situate on the border of their river, and also two others, farther off in the depth of the forest, and arrived at that of Imaha, the largest village in this nation. where peace was confirmed, and where the chief acknowledged that the village belonged to his Majesty. Two Akansas embarked with M. de la Salle to conduct him to the Talusas, their allies, about fifty leagues distant, who inhabit eight villages upon the borders of a little lake. On the 19th, we passed the villages of Tourika, Jason, and Kouera; but, as they did not border on the river, and were hostile to the Akansas and Taensas, we did not stop there.

On the 20th, we arrived at the Taensas, by whom we were exceedingly well received, and supplied with

a large quantity of provisions. M. de Tonty passed a night at one of their villages, where there were about seven hundred men carrying arms, assembled in the place. Here again a peace was concluded. A peace was also made with the Koroas, whose chief came there from the principal village of the Koroas, two leagues distant from that of the Natches. The two chiefs accompanied M. de la Salle to the banks of the river. Here the Koroa chief embarked with him, to conduct him to his village, where peace was again concluded with this nation, which, besides the five other villages of which it is composed, is allied to nearly forty others. On the 31st, we passed the village of the Oumas without knowing it, on account of the fog, and its distance from the river.

On the 3d of April, at about ten o'clock in the morning, we saw among the canes thirteen or fourteen canoes. M. de la Salle landed, with several of his people. Footprints were seen, and also savages, a little lower down, who were fishing, and who fled precipitately as soon as they discovered us. Others of our party then went ashore on the borders of a marsh formed by the inundation of the river. M. de la Salle sent two Frenchmen, and then two savages, to reconnoitre, who reported that there was a village not far off, but that the whole of this marsh, covered with canes, must be crossed to reach it; that they had been assailed with a shower of arrows by the inhabitants of the town, who had not dared to engage with them in the marsh, but who had then withdrawn, although neither the French nor the savages with them had fired, on account of the orders they had received not

to act unless in pressing danger. Presently we heard a drum beat in the village, and the cries and howlings with which these barbarians are accustomed to make attacks. We waited three or four hours, and, as we could not encamp in this marsh, and seeing no one, and no longer hearing anything, we embarked.

An hour afterwards, we came to the village of Maheouala, lately destroyed, and containing dead bodies and marks of blood. Two leagues below this place we encamped. We continued our voyage till the 6th, when we discovered three channels by which the River Colbert discharges itself into the sea. We landed on the bank of the most western channel, about three leagues from its mouth. On the 7th, M. de la Salle went to reconnoitre the shores of the neighboring sea, and M. de Tonty likewise examined the great middle channel. They found these two outlets beautiful, large, and deep. On the 8th, we reascended the river, a little above its confluence with the sea, to find a dry place, beyond the reach of inundations. The elevation of the North Pole was here about twenty-seven degrees. Here we prepared a column and a cross, and to the said column were affixed the arms of France, with this inscription;

LOUIS LE GRAND, ROI DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE, RÈGNE; LE NEUVIÈME AVRIL, 1682.

The whole party, under arms, chanted the *Te Deum*, the *Exaudiat*, the *Domine salvum fac Regem*; and then, after a salute of firearms and cries of *Vive le Roi*, the column was erected by M. de la Salle, who, standing near it, said, with a loud voice, in French;—

"In the name of the most high, mighty, invincible, and victorious Prince, Louis the Great, by the Grace of God King of France and of Navarre, Fourteenth of that name, this ninth day of April, one thousand six hundred and eighty-two, I, in virtue of the commission of his Majesty which I hold in my hand, and which may be seen by all whom it may concern, have taken, and do now take, in the name of his Majesty and of his successors to the crown, possession of this country of Louisiana, the seas, harbors, ports, bays, adjacent straits; and all the nations, people, provinces, cities, towns, villages, mines, minerals, fisheries, streams, and rivers, comprised in the extent of the said Louisiana, from the mouth of the great river St. Louis, on the eastern side, otherwise called Ohio, Alighin, Sipore, or Chukagona, and this with the consent of the Chaouanons, Chikachas, and other people dwelling therein, with whom we have made alliance; as also along the River Colbert, or Mississippi, and rivers which discharge themselves therein, from its source beyond the country of the Kious or Nadouessious, and this with their consent, and with the consent of the Motantees, Illinois, Mesigameas, Natches, Koroas, which are the most considerable nations dwelling therein, with whom also we have made alliance either by ourselves, or by others in our behalf;\* as far as its mouth at the sea, or

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\* There is an obscurity in this enumeration of places and Indian nations, which may be ascribed to an ignorance of the geography of the country; but it seems to be the design of the *Sieur de la Salle* to take possession of the whole territory watered by the Mississippi from its mouth to its source, and by the streams flowing into it on both sides.



Gulf of Mexico, about the twenty-seventh degree of the elevation of the North Pole, and also to the mouth of the River of Palms; upon the assurance, which we have received from all these nations, that we are the first Europeans who have descended or ascended the said River Colbert; hereby protesting against all those, who may in future undertake to invade any or all of these countries, people, or lands, above described, to the prejudice of the right of his Majesty, acquired by the consent of the nations herein named. Of which, and of all that can be needed, I hereby take to witness those who hear me, and demand an act of the Notary, as required by law."

To which the whole assembly responded with shouts of *Vive le Roi*, and with salutes of firearms. Moreover, the said Sieur de la Salle caused to be buried at the foot of the tree, to which the cross was attached, a leaden plate, on one side of which were engraved the arms of France, and the following Latin inscription.

LVDOVICVS MAGNVS REGNAT.

NONO APRILIS CIO IOC LXXXII.

ROBERTVS CAVELIER, CVM DOMINO DE TONTY,  
LEGATO, R. P. ZENOBIO MEMBRÉ, RECOLLECTO,  
ET VIGINTI GALLIS, PRIMVS HOC FLVMEN. INDE  
AB ILINEORVM PAGO, ENAVIGAVIT, EIVSQVE  
OSTIVM FECIT PERVIVM, NONO APRILIS ANNI  
CIO IOC LXXXII.

After which, the Sieur de la Salle said, that his Majesty, as eldest son of the Church, would annex no country to his crown, without making it his chief care to establish the Christian religion therein, and that



its symbol must now be planted ; which was accordingly done at once by erecting a cross, before which the *Vexilla* and the *Domine salvum fac Regem* were sung. Whereupon the ceremony was concluded with cries of *Vive le Roi*.

Of all and every of the above, the said Sieur de la Salle having required of us an instrument, we have delivered to him the same, signed by us, and by the undersigned witnesses, this ninth day of April, one thousand six hundred and eighty-two.

LA MÉTAIRIE,  
*Notary.*

DE LA SALLE.

P. ZENOBE, *Recollect, Missionary.*

HENRY DE TONTY.

FRANÇOIS DE BOISRONDET.

JEAN BOURDON.

SIEUR D'AUTRAY.

JAQUES CAUCHOIS.

PIERRE YOU.

GILLES MEUCRET.

JEAN MICHEL, *Surgeon.*

JEAN MAS.

JEAN DULIGNON.

NICOLAS DE LA SALLE.

## No. V.

## PETITION

OF THE CHEVALIER DE TONTY TO THE COUNT DE  
PONTCHARTRAIN, MINISTER OF MARINE.\*

MONSEIGNEUR,

HENRY DE TONTY humbly represents to your Highness, that he entered the military service as a cadet, and was employed in that capacity in the years 1668 and 1669; and that he afterwards served as a midshipman four years, at Marseilles and Toulon, and made seven campaigns, that is, four on board ships of war, and three in the galleys. While at Messina, he was made a captain, and, in the interval, lieutenant of the first company of a regiment of horse. When the enemy attacked the post of Libisso, his right hand was shot away by a grenade, and he was taken prisoner, and conducted to Metasse, where he was detained six months, and then exchanged for the sons of the governor of that place. He then went to France, to obtain some favor from his Majesty, and the King granted him three hundred livres. He returned to the service in Sicily, made the campaign as a volunteer in the galleys, and, when the troops were discharged, being unable to obtain the employment he solicited at court, on account of the general

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\* This paper is translated from the original, deposited in the archives of the Marine Department at Paris. It is without date, but was probably written at Quebec in the year 1690. Frontenac was at that time Governor-General of Canada.

peace, he decided, in 1678, to join the late Monsieur de la Salle, in order to accompany him in the discoveries of Mexico, during which, until 1682, he was the only officer who did not abandon him.

These discoveries being finished, he remained, in 1683, commandant of Fort St. Louis of the Illinois; and, in 1684, he was there attacked by two hundred Iroquois, whom he repulsed, with great loss on their side. During the same year, he repaired to Quebec, under the orders of M. de la Barre. In 1685, he returned to the Illinois, according to the orders which he received from the court, and from M. de la Salle, as a captain of foot in a Marine Detachment, and governor of Fort St. Louis. In 1686, he went, with forty men in canoes, at his own expense, as far as the Gulf of Mexico, to seek for M. de la Salle. Not being able to find him there, he returned to Montreal, and put himself under the orders of Monsieur Denonville, to engage in the war with the Iroquois. At the head of a band of Indians, in 1687, he proceeded two hundred leagues by land, and as far in canoes, and joined the army, when, with these Indians and a company of Canadians, he forced the ambuscade of the Tsonnonthouans.

The campaign being over, he returned to the Illinois, whence he departed, in 1689, to go in search of the remains of M. de la Salle's colony; but, being deserted by his men; and unable to execute his design, he was compelled to relinquish it, when he had arrived within seven days' march of the Spaniards. Ten months were spent in going and returning. As he now finds himself without employment, he prays

that, in consideration of his voyages and heavy expenses, and considering also, that, during his service of seven years as captain, he has not received any pay, your highness will be pleased to obtain for him from his Majesty a company, with which he may continue his services in this country, where he has not ceased to harass the Iroquois, by enlisting the Illinois against them in his Majesty's cause.

And he will continue his prayers for the health of your highness.

HENRY DE TONTY.

Nothing can be more true than the account given by the Sieur de Tonty in this petition; and should his Majesty reinstate the seven companies, which have been disbanded in this country, there will be justice in granting one of them to him, or some other recompense for the services which he has rendered, and which he is now returning to render, at Fort St. Louis of the Illinois.

FRONTENAC.

The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation, and that its history is a history of growth and expansion. The second is the fact that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these immigrants. The third is the fact that the United States is a nation of free men, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these free men.

The fourth is the fact that the United States is a nation of law, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these laws. The fifth is the fact that the United States is a nation of peace, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these peace.

The sixth is the fact that the United States is a nation of progress, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these progress.

The seventh is the fact that the United States is a nation of justice, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these justice. The eighth is the fact that the United States is a nation of liberty, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these liberty. The ninth is the fact that the United States is a nation of equality, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these equality. The tenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of unity, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these unity.

The eleventh is the fact that the United States is a nation of strength, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these strength. The twelfth is the fact that the United States is a nation of wisdom, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these wisdom. The thirteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of courage, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these courage.

The fourteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of hope, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these hope.

The fifteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of faith, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these faith.

The sixteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of love, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these love.

The seventeenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of kindness, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these kindness.

The eighteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of gentleness, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these gentleness.

The nineteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of meekness, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these meekness.

The twentieth is the fact that the United States is a nation of mildness, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the rights of these mildness.



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LIFE  
OF  
PATRICK HENRY.

BY  
ALEXANDER H. EVERETT, LL. D.

1871

THE NEW YORK

II

THE NEW YORK

# PATRICK HENRY.

## CHAPTER I.

*Birth and Parentage. — Education. — Commences Business as a Merchant. — Fails, and attempts Agriculture. — Second unsuccessful Attempt in Trade. — Marriage. — Admitted to the Bar.*

PATRICK HENRY is, in more than in one particular, among the most remarkable characters of the revolutionary period of our history. He is declared by Jefferson to have been "the greatest orator that ever lived," and "the person who, beyond all question, gave the first impulse to the movement, which terminated in the revolution." Whatever exaggeration, if any, may be supposed to have crept into these sweeping statements, it is certain that the merits and services which had power to call them forth from such a quarter, must have been of no ordinary kind.

Indeed, the accounts that have been trans-

mitted to us of the actual effects of his eloquence upon the minds of his hearers, though resting apparently on the best authority, seem almost fabulous, and certainly surpass any that we have on record of the results produced by the most distinguished orators of ancient or modern Europe. Something must probably be allowed for the excited imagination of the authors of these accounts; but the necessity for making this allowance proves, of itself, the extent to which Henry possessed what may be regarded as the essence of the highest kind of eloquence, and powers of strongly exciting the imagination of his hearers.

His claim to the honor of having given the first impulse to the revolutionary movement, is a question hardly susceptible of a satisfactory solution, since no event, prior to the battle of Lexington and the declaration of independence, was so decidedly different in character from a variety of others occurring at about the same time, as to merit, in contradistinction from them, the praise of being the first step in the progress of the revolution. It is certain, however, that, in one of the two leading colonies, during the period immediately preceding the revolution, Henry was constantly in advance of the most ardent patriots, and that he suggested and carried into effect, by his immediate personal in-

fluence, measures that were opposed as premature and violent by all the other eminent supporters of the cause of liberty. It was the good fortune of Henry to enjoy, during his lifetime, the appropriate reward of his extraordinary merits, and the almost unbounded admiration and respect of his countrymen.

By general acknowledgment, the greatest orator of his day; elevated by his transcendent talents to a sort of supremacy in the deliberative assemblies of which he was occasionally a member, and the courts of justice in which he exercised his profession; clothed, whenever he chose to accept them, with the highest executive functions in the gift of the people; happy in his domestic relations and private circumstances,—his career was one of almost unbroken prosperity. He has also been eminently fortunate in the manner in which the history of his life has been written. While the recollection of his eloquence and the admiration of his character were still fresh in the minds of numerous surviving contemporaries, the task of collecting and recording the expressions of them, which were circulating in conversation, or merely ephemeral notes, was undertaken by one whose kindred eloquence and virtues rendered him on every account the fittest person to do justice to the subject. In the following sketch, I can claim little other merit,



than that of condensing, with perhaps some few not very important modifications and additions, the glowing biography of Wirt.

The gifted author is represented, on the same high authority alluded to above, that of Jefferson, as having been at times led by the enthusiasm with which he entered into his subject, to the verge of fiction. Let us also apply to his work the title which the great German poet, Goethe, prefixed to his own autobiography, — *Poetry and Truth*. The narrative carries with it unquestionable evidence of authenticity; as well in the known character of the writer as in the authorities that are cited in support of every important statement, while it is written with so much warmth and elegance, that it possesses, throughout, all the charm of poetry, and perhaps produces, at times, a similar illusion. Although some few passages are a little too highly colored for the eye of good taste, there are few persons of eminence, who, after reading the whole, would not feel the wish which Queen Katharine, in the play, expressed in regard to her attendant, Griffith, that they might find themselves as fond and faithful a chronicler.

The family of Patrick Henry was of Scottish origin. His father, John Henry, was a native of Aberdeen; and he numbered among his family connections some of the distinguished literary

men of the day, having been a nephew, in the maternal line, to the historian Robertson, and cousin to David Henry, the brother-in-law to Edward Cave, and his successor in the conduct of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. John Henry emigrated to Virginia some time before the year 1730. He is said to have enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Dinwiddie, afterwards governor of the colony, who introduced him to the elder Colonel Syme, of Hanover county. In the family of the latter, Henry became domesticated, and, after the death of the colonel, married his widow, and resided on the estate. He appears to have enjoyed much consideration among his fellow-citizens, having been colonel of his regiment, principal surveyor of the county, and, for many years, presiding magistrate of the county court. Some years after his emigration, his brother Patrick, a clergyman of the Church of England, followed him to Virginia, and became, by his influence, minister of St. Paul's parish in Hanover, a place which he filled through life with high distinction. Both the brothers were conspicuous for their loyalty to the king and attachment to the church.

The widow of Colonel Syme, who became, as has been said, the wife of John Henry and the mother of Patrick, was a native of Hanover county, and a daughter of the family of Win-

ston, one of the most respectable in the colony. So far as the eloquence of Patrick Henry may be supposed to have been in any degree hereditary, it seems to have been transmitted to him through the maternal line. His mother is represented as having been remarkable for a fluent and easy elocution, and her brother, Judge Winston, was declared by a contemporary, who knew him well, to have been the greatest orator whom he had ever heard, Patrick Henry alone excepted. When the militia of Virginia were ordered, soon after Braddock's defeat, to the frontiers, the company to which Winston belonged, and of which he was lieutenant, were so much disheartened by the severity of the service, that they were on the point of breaking out into mutiny, when Winston, by a well-timed stump speech, succeeded in restoring order, and inspired them with so much enthusiasm, that they called upon their officers to lead them at once against the enemy.

It appears, from these statements, that the family of Patrick Henry was among the most distinguished in the colony. He was the second of nine children, and was born on the 29th of May, 1736, at the family seat in Hanover county, called Studley. His father removed, not long after, to another seat in the same county, then called Mount Brilliant, and now the Retreat; and

it was here that Patrick was educated. The family, though evidently in easy circumstances, does not seem to have been wealthy. The father had opened a grammar school in his own house ; and Patrick, after having acquired the elements of learning at an infant school in the neighborhood, was taken home, at ten years of age, to continue his studies. Under his father's tuition, he obtained some little smattering of the Latin language and of mathematics. He had no inclination whatever for book learning. As the discipline of such a school was not likely to be severe, he seems to have indulged, without much restraint, his taste for rural sports and solitary rambles through the neighboring fields and forests. At this period, he showed no sign of the high intellectual qualities for which he was afterwards distinguished. His personal appearance and manners were coarse and awkward, his dress neglected, and his faculties entirely obscured by habitual indolence. In mixed companies, he contributed little or nothing to the conversation, but is said to have listened with attention, and to have been able afterwards to repeat much of what had been said, with intelligent comments on the characters of the speakers. This is the only particular in his youthful habits that has since been recollected, as having indicated in any degree his future superiority.



Finding him wholly indisposed for literary and professional pursuits, his father undertook to establish him in trade; and, after placing him for a year in the counting-room of a neighboring merchant, furnished him and his brother William with a small capital, upon which they commenced business. William, it seems, was still more indolent than his brother; so that the management of the common concern devolved chiefly upon Patrick, who displayed as little aptitude for mercantile affairs as he had previously done for study. The confinement which this employment rendered necessary was irksome to him; and, although he was afterwards remarked for a rather thrifty disposition in his pecuniary affairs, the consequence, probably, of early embarrassments, he exhibited at this time an easiness of temper, and a negligence in making his bargains, which were not favorable to the success of the enterprise. Compelled to relinquish his habitual sports, he resorted, as a substitute for them, to music, and learned to play upon the violin and flute.

He also began, for the first time, to show some taste for reading; and exhibited, with increasing distinctness, the talent for nice observation of character which he had shown in his childhood. He encouraged his customers, when they met in his shop, to discuss questions which he suggested



for their consideration ; and, without taking much part himself in the debate, derived his principal amusement from comparing their habits of thought and action, as developed in the course of their respective remarks. At other times, he entertained them by narratives gathered from his miscellaneous reading, or framed by himself for the purpose. In these intellectual exercises we begin to perceive the first dawning of the brilliant talents by which, in after years, he so often entranced his audience. They seem, however, to have had no very favorable effect upon the success of his enterprise, which, after the experiment of a year, proved a failure. William retired at once from the concern, while Patrick was employed for two or three years afterwards in bringing it to a close as well as he could. In the mean time, at the age of eighteen, he had married Miss Shelton, the daughter of a neighboring farmer, of excellent character, but of narrow worldly fortune.

Unsuccessful alike in letters and in trade, the future orator, or more probably his friends, now directed his attention to agriculture. By the joint aid of the two families the newly-married couple were placed upon a small farm, from which, with the aid of one or two slaves, with whom they were also provided, they were to draw, by the sweat of their brows, the means

of subsistence. But the indolent habits, and aversion to systematic labor of any kind, which had occasioned the failure of his former attempts to effect a permanent establishment, were equally fatal to this. After an experiment of two years, he abandoned the plan, sold his property at a loss for cash, invested the proceeds in merchandise, and once more tempted fortune in the lottery of trade. In resuming his business as a merchant, he also resumed his former habits of conducting it. He employed, as before, a large portion of his time in conversation with his customers, or in music and light reading; and he frequently closed his warehouse for the purpose of pursuing his favorite recreations in the open air. Thus conducted, it is not very singular that, after another two years' trial, the second experiment in trade ended, like the former, in bankruptcy.

The position of Henry, in a worldly view, was now sufficiently embarrassing. He had lost all his little property, and had no capacity for supporting his family by any of the usual professions. His connections had done all they could for him. A feebler mind would have probably sunk under this complication of difficulties. Henry, far from being in any degree discouraged, was roused by it to the exertions which alone were necessary to the development of his splendid pow-

ers. Possessed, as he was at this time, by an unconquerable passion for amusement, probably nothing but absolute necessity of the most urgent kind could have furnished the spur that was wanting to his success; so that he might afterwards have said, with great propriety, in the words of an ancient, "I should have been ruined, if I had not been ruined." His biographers do not, however, appear to have appreciated his character with perfect correctness, when they attribute these repeated failures, in his attempts in business of different kinds, to mere indolence. His mind was not deficient in a principle of activity, but at this period it took exclusively the direction of amusement. The indispensable necessity of pursuing, with steady industry, the substantial objects of life, had not yet been brought home to him, and he yielded without resistance to the promptings of his naturally exuberant animal spirits. Even at the lowest ebb of his worldly fortunes, his disposition for sport and pleasantries remained unimpaired. Mr. Jefferson saw him for the first time at this period, and afterwards gave, in a letter to Mr. Wirt, the following account of his appearance and manners. Henry was then twenty-four years of age.

"My acquaintance with Mr. Henry commenced in the year 1759-60. On my way to the college, I passed the Christmas holidays at

Colonel Dandridge's, in Hanover, to whom Mr. Henry was a near neighbor. During the festivity of the season, I met him in society every day, and we became well acquainted, although I was much his junior, being then in my seventeenth year, and he a married man. His manners had something of coarseness in them; his passion was music, dancing, and pleasantry. He excelled in the last, and it attached every one to him. You ask some account of his mind and information at this period; but you will recollect that we were almost continually engaged in the usual revelries of the season. The occasion, perhaps, as much as his idle disposition, prevented his engaging in any conversation, which might give the measure of his mind or information. Opportunity was not, indeed, wholly wanting, because Mr. John Campbell was there, who had married Mrs. Spotswood, the sister of Colonel Dandridge. He was a man of science, and often introduced conversation on scientific subjects. Mr. Henry had, a little before, broken up his store, or rather it had broken him up; but his misfortunes were not to be traced either in his countenance or conduct."

But though the absorbing passion for pleasure, which at this time formed the distinguishing characteristic of Henry's mind, had been fatal to his success in the various employments which

he had hitherto attempted, it had not entirely deprived him of proper intellectual culture. During his first experiment in trade, he had devoted, as has been said, a part of his leisure to light reading. In the course of the second, which was of somewhat longer duration, he extended his studies to subjects of a more serious character, and made himself familiar with geography and history, particularly the documentary and political history of Virginia. *Multum, non multa*, (much, but not a great many books,) is the well-known rule for judicious and profitable reading.

This rule was enforced upon Henry by the circumstances of the times and country in which he lived. Cheap literature was not yet in fashion, and in settlements so remote from the central points of civilization as the interior of Virginia then was, the supply of even standard works was not very abundant. A person who had acquired a taste for reading could only gratify it by repeated perusals of a few writers. The historians of Greece and Rome, whom he read in English translations, were his favorite study. Livy, in particular, was a sort of manual with him; and he subsequently informed a friend, that, in the earlier part of his life, he made it a rule to read the whole of this charming writer at least as often as once in every year. The



Virginian Demosthenes was imitating, perhaps without knowing it, the example of his great prototype, who is said to have copied the whole of Thucydides eight times with his own hand. The remarkable and significant fact just alluded to shows the vigor with which Henry's naturally elevated mind, though incapable of binding itself down to the uncongenial tasks, which had thus far been presented to it, soared above the sphere of its habitual pursuits and pleasures in search of intellectual nutriment suited to its character.

How infinitely preferable was this course of reading, whether considered in its effect on the judgment, the feelings, or the taste, to the confused mass of magazines, reviews, and novels, that occupy the hours of students of the present day! In the constant use of this noble manual we may, no doubt, trace, in no slight degree, the energy of purpose, the high tone of moral sentiment, the sound practical wisdom, in short, the Roman cast of character, using the phrase in the very best sense, which marked, throughout, the course of Henry, and which, but for the fact just mentioned, would have been unexplained by any known circumstances in his early pursuits and studies. With such training, however irregularly obtained, and with the splendid capacities, which were yet to be developed, it only remained for Henry to place

himself in a situation where his talents would be brought into exercise, in order to assume at once the eminent position to which they entitled him. The moment was, however, critical; another mistake in the choice of a profession, like those which he had already made, and ending in a continuation of his former ill success, would have condemned him for life to hopeless dependence and utter insignificance. On the contrary, he was still young enough to reclaim, by a vigorous application of his powers to the uses for which they were intended, the time that he had lost, and to enter, with still unclouded prospects of success, on the business of life.

Everything depended on the course, which he was now to take; and his decision proved to be a most fortunate one for himself and his country. Baffled in his efforts to provide for his family in any of the less conspicuous occupations, he resolved to grasp at the highest and most difficult of all, the practice of law. It may be doubted, however, whether his views, in adopting the legal profession, went beyond the acquisition of a moderate subsistence. He was still unconscious of the extent of his abilities, and may, perhaps, have been determined on selecting another employment, by the fact, that he could attempt the bar without the necessity of a moneyed capital, rather than by any anticipation of the

eminence which he afterwards acquired. His situation rendered it, of course, important to contract as much as possible the time of preparation.

Judge Tyler, the father of the present president of the United States, was informed by Henry himself, that he devoted one month only to this purpose, during which he read only Coke upon Littleton, and the Virginia statutes. Mr. Jefferson, who was in the college at Williamsburg when Henry came there to obtain his license, was told by himself, that he had studied only six weeks. Other accounts fix the time at six, eight, and nine months; but these variations are of little importance. It was not unnatural, that, under these circumstances, he should have found some difficulty in obtaining the necessary license from the board of examiners, which appears to have consisted of John and Peyton Randolph, Judge Wythe, and Robert C. Nicholas, all of them persons of superior talent and the highest eminence in the profession. According to the account of Mr. Jefferson, who was on the spot at the time, and partially acquainted with the circumstances, though he may not have remembered them so accurately as Henry himself, the two Randolphs, who were persons of great facility of temper, first consented to sign the license, though with great reluctance. Wythe

positively refused, and Nicholas at first declined, but finally, after great importunity and promises of future reading, gave his name, which completed the necessary number.

In the account given by Judge Tyler of a conversation which he had with Henry himself on the same subject, he is represented as having said, that, after obtaining the signatures of two of the examiners, he presented himself to John Randolph, afterwards attorney-general of the colony, a profound lawyer and a finished gentleman. Finding how little he had read, and not being favorably impressed with his appearance and manner, Randolph at first refused to examine Henry, but at length, on being told that he had already obtained two signatures, began to interrogate him, though with evident reluctance. The replies made by Henry satisfied him at once that he was no common man. He then entered upon an examination, which lasted several hours, embracing not only the local and colonial law, but the whole field of jurisprudence, in its widest extent, including the law of nations and general history. In the course of the examination, in order to test the logical ability of the candidate, Randolph disputed some of his positions, and drew him into a discussion, at the close of which he admitted that Henry had the best of the argument. He finally gave his signature, with the flattering re-

mark, that he would never be deceived by appearances again ; and that, if Henry's industry should be at all proportioned to his genius, he would become very shortly an ornament to his profession.

Such were the auspices under which Patrick Henry was admitted to the bar. Ignorant, as he was, not only of law as a science, and of the most familiar forms of its practical administration, incapable, as is said, of drawing a declaration or making a motion in court, it is not very wonderful that he obtained at first but little employment. His uncle, Judge Winston, states, that, during the first four years after he received his license, he remained entirely undistinguished. His circumstances were extremely narrow, and he appears to have resided the greater part of the time with his father-in-law, Mr. Shelton, who then kept a tavern at Hanover court-house. When Shelton was absent from home, Henry officiated in his stead, and probably lent him at other times such aid as was necessary. This fact accounts for the statement, which has sometimes been made, and which does not seem to be very far from the truth, that he was, at one period in his early life, a bar-keeper at a tavern.

The rumor, so far as it is well founded, adds another to the numerous occupations, through which the brilliant orator was compelled to make his way to distinction. At length the clouds, that



had so long hovered over his prospects, cleared away. The celebrated *Parsons' Cause*, as it is still called in Virginia, afforded him the opportunity, which alone was wanting, to establish his powers, and placed him at once at the head of the profession.

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## CHAPTER II.

### *The Parsons' Cause. — First remarkable Exhibition of Henry's Eloquence.*

THE account of the Parsons' Cause is one of those passages in the life of Henry, in which poetry appears to be in some degree mingled with truth; nor is it easy, with the information now before us, to say, with entire certainty, what parts of the narrative appertain respectively to one or the other of these departments. The particulars of the affair are briefly as follows.

The Parsons' Cause was an action brought by the Rev. James Maury, in the county court of Hanover county, against the collector of taxes for that county and his sureties, for the recovery of damages for the non-payment of a certain quantity of tobacco, alleged to be due to him

on account of his salary. The claim was founded in a statute of the colony, originally passed in the year 1696, and reënacted, with amendments, in the year 1748, which fixed the annual stipend of a parish minister at sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco, and authorized him to demand payment in the article itself. He was, of course, at liberty to receive it in any other way that might suit his convenience. The common market price of tobacco had, for a long time, remained stationary at two pence the pound, or sixteen shillings and eight pence the hundred, and the clergy were in the habit of commuting the delivery of the article in kind for a money payment calculated on this basis.

In the year 1755, the crop of tobacco having fallen short, the price rose to fifty or sixty shillings the hundred. In order to relieve the planters from the effect of this accidental change in the value of the article, the legislature passed an act authorizing them, for the present year, to pay in money such of these debts as might be due in tobacco, at the rate of sixteen shillings and eight pence the hundred. The act was to continue in force for ten months, and went into effect immediately, not having contained the clause which was usually inserted in the acts of the colonial legislature, suspending their operation until they should receive the royal assent. No

opposition was made by the clergy to the execution of this law, which was regularly carried into effect during the period for which it was enacted.

Three years afterwards, in the year 1758, in consequence of the probability of the occurrence of another short crop, the law of 1755 was reenacted, and, as before, without the clause requiring the royal assent. The clergy now took alarm, and the measure was attacked in a vigorous pamphlet, entitled *The Two-penny Act*, published by the Rev. John Camm, rector of York-Hampton parish, and Episcopalian commissary for the colony. He was answered in two pamphlets, one written by Colonel Richard Bland, and the other by Colonel Landon Carter, in which the commissary was treated without much ceremony. He replied in a still more pointed pamphlet, entitled *The Colonels Dismounted*. The colonels rejoined, and a war of pamphlets followed, which created a great excitement throughout the colony. The popular sentiment appears to have been adverse to the pretensions of the clergy, and at length became so strong, that the printers within the colony refused to publish for them, so that Mr. Camm was finally compelled to resort to Maryland for a publisher.

The pamphlets, which were elicited by this

controversy, are still extant, and Mr. Wirt remarks, that "It seems impossible to deny, at this day, that the clergy had much the best of the argument." This, however, seems to be a merely technical view of the subject, founded on the idea, that the colonial laws were not valid without the royal assent, and that the clergy had, of course, retained, throughout the whole affair, all the rights, that were vested in them by the act of 1748. Such, probably, was the correct construction of the law ; but it seems to be clear, that the equity of the affair was on the other side, and that, so far as the argument turned upon any other topic than that of strict legal right, the planters were able to make out a very strong case. The act of 1748 was a liberal and beneficial statute, intended to secure the clergy against the effect of fluctuations in the value of money ; and it was hardly fair or honorable in the clergy to take advantage of this act of liberality in the planters, to extort from them, in a time of scarcity, triple the amount of the usual stipend. If the rise in the price of tobacco had been the effect of a depreciation in the value of money, and had extended to all other articles, the equity would have been with the clergy, because they could not have obtained the real value of their usual stipend without receiving it in kind.

But as the rise took place in the article of tobacco only, being the effect of a short crop, while the value of money remained the same, the clergy, by commuting the payment in tobacco for a money payment at the former price, would have received the full amount of their usual salary, and this was all that they could fairly claim. Mr. Wirt remarks, that they could not help observing the benefits resulting from the act to the rich planters, who received fifty or sixty shillings the hundred for their tobacco, while they were paying their tobacco debts at the rate of sixteen shillings and eight pence. He does not seem to have recollected, that the rise in the price of tobacco was the effect of a reduction in the quantity. If the planter, by selling a crop of only a third of the ordinary amount, for three times the usual price, was able to avoid the injurious effect of a short crop, he was still in no better condition than he would have been if the rise had not occurred; and if he paid his tobacco debts in kind at the existing high prices, he sustained an actual loss equal to two thirds of the amount due. It was not fair, as has been remarked, for the clergy to extort this difference under pretence of a law, which the planters had passed for the relief and benefit of the order. If, therefore, the law was with the clergy, the equity was clearly with the planters.



The legal objection to the act of 1748 was also one of the narrowest kind, and was, in reality, scarcely tenable.

Admitting, as a general rule, that the acts of a colonial legislature were not valid without the royal assent, it could not well be denied, that a legislature, situated at such an immense distance from the mother country, must be supposed to possess some discretionary power to proceed without direct authority from home in a case of real necessity, and this was obviously one of that kind. The state of the crop could not be ascertained much in advance of the time when it would be brought to market; and, in order to meet the emergency, the law must be enacted, and carried into effect, before, in that day of protracted voyages and slow communications, there would be time to submit it to the eye of majesty. If substantial justice required the adoption of such a measure, and it was really impossible, under the circumstances, to have the royal assent, the act might well have been regarded, even without such assent, as technically valid; more especially as the mutual prerogatives of the local and imperial governments were far from being accurately settled. At all events, the right, taking into view both law and equity, was by no means so clearly on the side of the clergy as Mr. Wirt represents

it; and it is not at all surprising that the champions of the planters, arguing the case, as they probably did, chiefly on grounds of common sense and substantial justice, were able to make a strong impression upon the minds of the people.

The affair was brought before the king in council; and that body, sustaining naturally enough the construction of the law, and favorable to the royal prerogative, declared the act of 1758 null and void, for want of the royal assent. Finding themselves supported in their pretensions by this high authority, the clergy undertook to enforce them by legal process, and commenced a number of suits for the recovery of their salaries in tobacco, of which that instituted by Maury was one. Another of the same kind was commenced in the same county by the Rev. Patrick Henry, who has already been mentioned as the orator's uncle. The fact that Henry was not employed by his uncle in this interesting cause is a strong proof that little was yet expected, even by those who knew him best, and felt the deepest interest in his welfare, from his future efforts in his new profession.

The plaintiff, in this case of Maury, as I have remarked before, founded his claim in the statute of 1748. The defendant pleaded specially that of 1758; and to this plea the plaintiff demurred;

or, in other words, replied that this act could not operate, in law, to set aside the plaintiff's claim; first, because it had not received the royal assent, and, secondly, because it had been declared null and void by the king in council. The legal question was argued at the November term of the year 1763, by Mr. Lyons for the plaintiff, and Mr. John Lewis for the defendants, when the court, "very much," says Mr. Wirt, "to the credit of their candor and firmness, breasted the popular current by sustaining the demurrer." The clergy, having obtained a decision of the court in their favor, on the only objection that had been raised by the planters, naturally considered their cause as gained. It only remained for a jury to give the damages; but this was regarded as a merely formal proceeding, because the amount was supposed to be settled by the statute of 1748. The action was continued for this purpose; but the counsel for the defendants, Mr. Lewis, viewing the only point of importance as settled, and his services as no longer necessary, retired from the case. It was at this stage in the progress of the affair, and in consequence of the retirement of Mr. Lewis, that Patrick Henry was retained by the defendants. Probably the case was now supposed to have been brought within so narrow a compass, that it might be safely intrusted to a

junior member of the bar, hitherto, unknown to the public.

Whatever may have been the views of the defendants in retaining him, Henry, on being applied to, consented to take charge of the affair, and to argue the question of damages before the jury. The case came on for trial on the 1st of December, 1763, before the county court, in which the father of Henry sat as presiding magistrate. The position of the young barrister was, in fact, a rather singular one. He was to speak, for the first time in open court, before his own father, as presiding magistrate, in a case in which the court had already given a deliberate opinion in favor of the other party, and in which his uncle was interested against him.

The excitement on the subject was so great throughout the colony, that, even at this late period in the proceedings, a large audience attended, not only from Hanover, but from the neighboring counties. The clergy, in particular, appeared in great force, and among them came the orator's uncle. On seeing him approach, Henry walked up to him, in company with Colonel Meredith, and expressed his regret at seeing his uncle there. "Why so?" inquired the uncle. "Because," replied Henry, "I fear that, as I have never yet spoken in public, I shall be too much overawed by your presence to do

justice to my clients. Besides," he added, "I shall be under the necessity of saying some *hard things* of the clergy, which it may be unpleasant to you to hear." His uncle now censured him for having undertaken the case on the side of the planters, which Henry excused by saying that he had had no offer from the clergy; and that, independently of this, his own heart and judgment were on the side of the people. He then requested his uncle to leave the ground. "Why, Patrick," said the old gentleman, with a good-natured smile, "as to *your* saying hard things of the clergy, I advise you to be cautious, as you will be more likely to injure your own cause than theirs. As to my leaving the ground, I fear, my boy, that, with such a case to defend, my presence will do you but little harm or good. Since, however, you seem to think otherwise, and desire it of me so earnestly, you shall be gratified." He then entered his carriage again, and returned home.

This little anecdote, which I have given nearly in the words of Mr. Wirt, is equally creditable to both parties, and affords a pleasing proof of the mutual good feeling, which, under somewhat trying circumstances, was maintained among the different members of the family. It is impossible to do full justice to the scene that followed,



without quoting the description of it in the language of the eloquent biographer.

“Soon after the opening of the court, the cause was called. It stood on a writ of inquiry of damages, no plea having been entered by the defendants since the judgment on the demurrer. The array before Mr. Henry’s eyes was now most fearful. On the bench sat more than twenty clergymen, the most learned men in the colony, and the most capable, as well as the severest critics before whom it was possible for him to have made his *début*. The court-house was crowded with an overwhelming multitude, and surrounded with an immense and anxious throng, who, not finding room to enter, were endeavoring to listen without in the deepest attention. But there was something still more awfully disconcerting than all this; for in the chair of the presiding magistrate sat no other person than his own father. Mr. Lyons opened the case very briefly. In the way of argument he did nothing more than explain to the jury that the decision upon the demurrer had put the act of 1758 entirely out of the way, and left the law of 1748 as the only standard of damages. He then concluded with a highly-wrought eulogium on the benevolence of the clergy.

“And now came on the first trial of Patrick Henry’s strength. No one had ever heard him

speak, and curiosity was on tiptoe. He rose very awkwardly, and faltered much in his exordium. The people hung their heads at so unpromising a commencement; the clergy were observed to exchange sly looks with each other, and his father is described as having almost sunk with confusion from his seat. But these feelings were of short duration, and soon gave place to others of a different character. For now were those wonderful faculties which he possessed, for the first time, developed, and now was first witnessed that mysterious and almost supernatural transformation of appearance, which the fire of his own eloquence never failed to work in him. For, as his mind rolled along, and began to glow from its own action, all the *exuviae* of the clown seemed to shed themselves spontaneously. His attitude, by degrees, became erect and lofty. The spirit of his genius awakened all his features. His countenance shone with a nobleness and grandeur which it had never before exhibited. There was a lighting in his eyes that seemed to rive the spectator. His action became graceful, bold, and commanding; and in the tones of his voice, but more especially in his emphasis, there was a peculiar charm, a magic, of which any one, who ever heard him, will speak as soon as he is named, but of which no one can give any ade-

quate description. They can only say that it struck upon the ear and upon the heart, *in a manner which language cannot tell*. Add to all these his wonder-working fancy, and the peculiar phraseology in which he clothed his images; for he painted to the heart with a force that almost petrified it. In the language of those who heard him on this occasion, 'he made their blood run cold, and their hair to rise on end.'

"It will not be difficult for any one, who ever heard this most extraordinary man, to believe the whole account of this transaction, which is given by his surviving hearers; and from their account the court-house at Hanover must have exhibited, on this occasion, a scene as picturesque as has ever been witnessed in real life. They say that the people, whose countenances had fallen as he arose, had heard but a very few sentences before they began to look up; then to look at each other with surprise, as if doubting the evidence of their own senses; then, attracted by some strong gesture, struck by some majestic attitude, fascinated by the spell of his eye, the charm of his emphasis, and the varied and commanding expression of his countenance, they could look away no more. In less than twenty minutes, they might be seen in every part of the house, on every bench, in every window, stooping forward from their stands, in death-like

silence ; their features fixed in amazement and awe ; all their senses listening and riveted upon the speaker, as if to catch the last strain of some heavenly visitant. The mockery of the clergy was soon turned into alarm ; their triumph into confusion and despair ; and, at one burst of his rapid and overwhelming invective, *they fled from the bench in precipitation and terror*. As for the father, such was his surprise, such his amazement, such his rapture, that, forgetting where he was, and the character which he was filling, tears of ecstasy streamed down his cheeks, without the power or inclination to repress them.

“ The jury seem to have been so completely bewildered that they lost sight not only of the act of 1748, but of that of 1758 also ; for, thoughtless even of the admitted right of the plaintiff, they had scarcely left the bar, when they returned with a verdict of *one penny damages*. A motion was made for a new trial ; but the court, too, had now lost the equipoise of their judgment, and overruled the motion by a unanimous vote. The verdict and judgment overruling the motion were followed by redoubled acclamations from within and without the house. The people, who had with difficulty kept their hands off their champion, from the moment of his closing his harangue, no sooner

saw the fate of the cause finally sealed, than they seized him at the bar, and, in spite of his own exertions and the continued cry of 'Order,' from the sheriff and the court, they bore him out of the court-house, and, raising him on their shoulders, carried him about the yard in a kind of electioneering triumph."

His father is represented as having been so much overwhelmed as to lose, for the time, the power of expressing his feelings. A few days after, in conversation with his brother-in-law, Judge Winston, he alluded to the scene in the following simple terms, which contrast rather singularly with the gorgeous phraseology of Mr. Wirt. "Patrick spoke in this cause near an hour, and in a manner that surprised me. He showed himself well-informed upon a subject of which I did not think he had any knowledge."

"I have tried much," continues Mr. Wirt, "to procure a sketch of this celebrated speech. But those of Mr. Henry's hearers, who survive, seem to have been bereft of their senses. They can only tell you, in general, that they were taken captive, and were so delighted with their captivity, that they followed implicitly whithersoever he led them; that, at his bidding, their tears flowed from pity, and their cheeks flushed with indignation; that, when it was over, they felt as if they had just awaked from some ecstatic



dream, of which they were unable to recall or connect the particulars. It was such a speech as they believe had never before fallen from the lips of man; and, to this day, the old people of that county cannot conceive that a higher compliment can be paid to a speaker, than to say of him, in their own homely phrase, 'He is almost equal to Patrick, when he plead against the parsons.'"

In this account of the character and effect of Henry's argument, there is obviously a large mixture of the poetical element, carried, in fact, rather beyond the limits of good taste in the forms of expression. The main facts are, however, of such a kind, that they cannot well have been fabricated or misrepresented. The verdict of the jury and the opinions of the court are matters of record; the eager attention of the audience during the argument, and the popular triumph at the close, are quite in accordance with the general character of the scene. The only statement of fact that wears a rather doubtful appearance is "the flight of the clergy in precipitation and terror from the bench." Whatever disgust or indignation may have been excited in their minds by the invectives of Henry, there was no reason to apprehend any danger to their personal safety.

The fact, probably, was that one or more, possibly the whole body of the clergy, on

ascertaining the line of argument which he intended to pursue, retired from the bench, not in terror, but from unwillingness to listen to a furious attack on their own order. The irregularity of the proceeding does not seem to have been quite so great as Mr. Wirt represents it. He says, that the subject of the act of 1758, and the order of council respecting it, had been disposed of at the preceding term, and that, strictly speaking, neither Henry nor the jury had any thing to do with this part of the case; that the jury, in giving merely nominal damages, had lost sight, not only of the act of 1758, but of that of 1748, and of the admitted right of the plaintiff; and that the court, in overruling the motion for a new trial, showed that "they had lost the equipoise of their judgment." He can only account for such proceedings in part by the supposed laxity of the county court practice, and in part by the overwhelming effect of Henry's eloquence.

In reality, however, although the court had decided, at the preceding term, that the demurrer was good in law, it remained for the jury to settle, as a question of fact, the amount of damage actually suffered. Supposing the law to be with the clergy, substantial justice might still be on the other side; and in that case, the damage sustained by the clergy was of the kind described

in the books as *damnum absque injuria* (damage without injury). In such a case, a verdict of nominal damages is obviously the proper one, the precise object of such a verdict being to recognize the existence of a legal right on one side, and an equitable one on the other; nor does it appear that the court had any sufficient motive for granting a new trial. The law question had been decided at the preceding term, agreeably to the views of the party making the motion, and, of course, did not require to be reconsidered. The verdict of the jury, whether right or wrong, was within the form of law, and was liable to no exception which would justify an application for a new trial.

The case, as I have remarked before, was a good deal stronger against the clergy than Mr. Wirt is inclined to represent it, and seems, on the whole, to have been disposed of, at every stage of the proceedings, in a manner very creditable to the firmness and independence of the parties to which it was successively submitted. The court, composed probably for the most part of planters, evinced a laudable disinterestedness in deciding the demurrer against themselves, and in favor of the clergy. The jury exhibited both intelligence and independence, in taking the course which enabled them to reconcile substantial justice with the form of law; and the court,

in overruling the motion for a new trial, only carried into effect the common rules of proceeding.

It is highly probable, that the eloquence of Henry operated powerfully on the minds of the court and jury, as well as on those of the audience; but it is certain that its effect must have been greatly heightened by the strong sympathy, that prevailed throughout the community with the party which he supported, and the universal disposition of his hearers to receive with favor everything that he might say. Without intending any disparagement to his talents, we may perhaps conclude, with safety, that the strong excitement which existed in regard to the question at issue furnishes the true key to the more extravagant, and otherwise almost incredible, incidents that marked the proceedings in the trial of the Parsons' Cause. While it was in Henry a strong proof of real power, that, on appearing for the first time as an advocate, he was able to meet the exigencies of such a scene, it was also an instance of good fortune to have been called upon to make his *début* in a case in which he necessarily carried with him the full current of popular feeling, and thus to enter, under the most favorable auspices, upon his professional career. Without adverting to the extraordinary interest felt at the time in this

case, it would be difficult to account for the fact, that, in the long course of his subsequent efforts in so many different fields, he never seems to have surpassed, if, indeed, he ever quite equalled, the impression, which he made upon this occasion, and that the argument in the Parsons' Cause is still cited as the *ne plus ultra* of his unrivalled eloquence.

Of the topics treated in this celebrated speech, the only one of which any account has been preserved, is that of the validity of the act of 1758, and of the proceedings respecting it by the king in council. Henry is represented by Mr. Wirt, on the authority, as I understand him, of oral tradition, as having maintained that government was in the nature of a compact between the king and the people; that the king, on failing to secure his subjects in Virginia against the results of a short crop of tobacco, had violated this compact, and thereby discharged the other party from the duty of executing it; and that the people had provided for their own safety by the act of 1758, the validity of which was in no way affected by the declaration of its nullity from the king in council. This is not, perhaps, the strongest form in which the argument on this topic could have been presented for the purpose which Henry had in view. It is not improbable that his reasoning may have been somewhat mis-



represented in passing through the mouths of oral reporters. The object of Henry was to obtain a verdict of nominal damages, by showing that, wherever the legal right might be, substantial justice was on the side of the planters. In this purpose it was not necessary to argue, that the king was bound by the social compact to secure the Virginia planters against the results of a short crop of tobacco, which he could not well be expected to do, or that the order in council, annulling the act of 1758, had no legal validity. The natural course of the argument would be, that the clergy had no claim in justice to triple their salaries, at the expense of the planters, in consequence of an accidental rise in the value of a particular article; that, in founding such a claim upon a circumstance, which was in itself in the nature of a public calamity, the clergy acted inconsistently with their professional character; that the legislature, in securing the planters by law against such a pretension, proceeded in accordance with the dictates of natural justice; that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, it was physically impossible to obtain the king's assent to the law, and that the legislature were consequently justified by necessity in proceeding without it; and that the subsequent declaration of the council, however it might affect the validity of the law, could not affect

the equity of the case, nor consequently impair the right of the plaintiff to a verdict of merely nominal damages. This is the argument, which would naturally have been suggested by the aspect under which the case was presented. It is tenable in all its points, and only required to be stated with power and eloquence, in order to carry conviction to the mind of every hearer. The development of it would naturally include a course of severe animadversion on the conduct of the clergy, in seeking to fatten on the public distress; but it would not have been necessary to insist on any views of the law inconsistent with those, which had already been taken by the court. It may, therefore be presumed, that it is the outline of the argument adopted by Henry.

Such is the history of the famous Parsons' Cause. The clergy took no steps for carrying the matter before a higher tribunal. Mr. Camm published another pamphlet, in which the *obscure advocate* of the planters, and the court in which the cause had been tried, were treated with great contempt. But the interest that had been for some time felt in this affair was immediately forgotten, under the stronger excitement produced by the opening scenes of the revolutionary contest, and left no results of consequence, excepting that of having brought before the public view, under the most favorable auspices, at this critical

period, an individual better fitted, perhaps, by character and talents, than any other in the colony, to ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm.

Henry was at once retained for the planters in all the cases then in court, depending on the same principles with that of Mr. Maury; but they were all withdrawn by the clergy, and never came to trial. His business increased considerably, but was still for some time hardly adequate to his support; and, for the purpose of obtaining a wider field for his operations, he removed to the county of Louisa, where he resided at a place called the *Roundabout*. Here he resumed, in connection with his professional occupations, his favorite rural sports, and has been known to hunt the deer for several days together, carrying his provision with him, and at night encamping in the woods. After the hunt was over, he would go from the ground to the Louisa court-house in his hunting apparel, take up the first of his causes that happened to be called, and, if it afforded any scope for display, astonish the court and jury by the effusions of his natural eloquence. His power of enchaining the attention of his hearers is strikingly shown by a remark of Judge Lyons, the same person who had argued the Parsons' Cause against him, and who has been heard to say, that, while practising at the bar, he could

always write a letter, or draft a legal paper, in court, with as much freedom of mind as in his own office, under all circumstances, excepting when *Patrick* rose to speak ; but that, whenever this happened, however trifling might be the matter in question, he was obliged to throw aside his pen, and could not write a word until the speech was finished.

In the autumn of 1764, about a year after his argument in the Parsons' Cause, Henry was employed to appear before a committee of the House of Burgesses, in a case of a contested election, and acquitted himself with great distinction. But the moment had now arrived when he was himself to take his seat in the assembly, and for a time to govern its proceedings on the mighty questions in regard to which the colonies were at issue with the mother country.

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### CHAPTER III.

*Elected a Member of the House of Burgesses. —  
Brings forward his celebrated Resolutions on  
the Stamp Act.*

THE year in which Patrick Henry argued the Parsons' Cause was distinguished by an event of

high importance to the concerns of this continent, and ultimately, through them, of the whole Christian world. In that year were signed at Paris, by the representatives of the principal European powers, the definitive treaties which brought to a close the war of 1756, commonly called, in this country, the *Old French War*. By these treaties, France, then in the hands of the corrupt and imbecile administration, which governed in the name of Louis the Fifteenth, threw from her, as if in wantonness, the vast territory which she had previously possessed on this continent, and which, properly administered, might have secured to her the dominion of the whole. Canada was ceded to Great Britain. Louisiana, comprehending, as claimed by France, the entire valley of the Mississippi, from the mouth of that river to its sources, and from the Allegany to the Rocky Mountains, perhaps, on the whole, the richest and most favored region of equal extent on the face of the globe, was given away, as it seems, without any motive whatever, to Spain. By the same treaties, Florida was ceded by Spain to England.

It was doubtless supposed, at the time, that these arrangements had consolidated and established forever the dominion of Great Britain over the whole western continent. Occupying the coast from Davis's Straits to Cape Florida, re-



lieved from the dangerous neighborhood of the French, who had hitherto in some degree kept them in check, and with nothing to oppose their farther progress but a torpid Spanish government at New Orleans, it was naturally supposed that the colonies would regularly and eagerly push forward their settlements into the interior, until they had driven the Spaniards from the continent ; in short, that they would run, as British subjects, the same career, which they have, in fact, pursued as citizens of the United States.

This was the superficial aspect of the case ; but a keener foresight into the future might, perhaps, even then have satisfied the observer that the result of these arrangements would be of a directly opposite character, and would tend to weaken and dismember, rather than consolidate and strengthen, the British power. The neighborhood of the French was the principal circumstance that counteracted this tendency to independence, which naturally grew out of the remote situation of the British colonies, and their peculiar habits of thought and feeling. At the occurrence of every new war in Europe, the British settlements in America were exposed to new inroads from the interior, aggravated in their effects by all the horrors of savage warfare. The necessity of obtaining the aid of the mother country in repelling these attacks, and the sym-

pathy generated by the concert of action thus produced, created, for the time, a community of feeling, which could never have been produced in any other way. The acquisition of Canada removed this check to the spirit of independence; and it might, perhaps, have been anticipated that this spirit would now develop itself with greater assurance and freedom than before. But even in this view of the subject, no contemporary observer would ever have predicted the rapidity, with which the new combination of circumstances produced its effects. At no period in the history of the colonies had the feeling on their part towards the mother country been so cordial, as it was at the conclusion of the peace of 1763. Twelve years afterwards, the mother country and the colonies were at open war; in thirteen, the colonies had declared independence; and in twenty, the representatives of the same powers, that made the arrangements of 1763, signed, at Paris, another set of treaties, the principal result of which was to recognize the national existence of the United States. So rapid, in some cases at least, is the progress of the revolutions which determine the fortunes of nations, and change the face of the world.

The event, which immediately brought on this new and wholly unexpected series of occurrences, took place in England in the year

following the peace, and was one of its results. Desiring to make the reductions in the taxes, that are usual after the close of a long war, and finding it necessary at the same time to provide for the interest of a large war debt, the British ministry, in order to combine the two objects as far as possible, began to look about for new sources of revenue, and conceived the idea of raising funds by taxing the colonies. In pursuance of this project, on the 10th of March, 1764, a declaratory resolution was adopted in Parliament, to the effect, that it "would be proper to impose certain stamp duties on the colonies and plantations, for the purpose of raising an American revenue, payable into the British exchequer." At the next session of Parliament, in the year 1765, a law was passed, in conformity with this resolution, commonly called the Stamp Act.

The resolution and the act, though adopted by large majorities, were opposed in Parliament by a respectable minority, chiefly on the ground of constitutional law. The right of the government to raise money from the people by taxation was declared to be coëxtensive with, and incidental to, the right of the people to be represented in Parliament. As the colonies were not represented in Parliament, they could not rightfully be taxed. The correctness of this principle, even in its application to the mother country,

may, perhaps, be regarded as somewhat questionable. With the inhabitants of the British islands, the right of being directly represented in Parliament is far from being, or having been at any time, coëxtensive with the duty of paying taxes, and the idea of virtual representation, it was supposed, might as well be applied to the population of the colonies, as to the unrepresented part of that of the mother country. . . .

It may be urged, indeed, with some degree of plausibility, that, where the legislator is himself subject to his own laws, there is less danger of oppression than where they are made applicable only to a distant country. But this is a consideration of equity and expediency, rather than of strict right. In reality, the constitutional rights of British subjects, which at home depended on usage rather than strict definition, became, in the anomalous circumstances under which the colonies were settled, so entirely matters of inference and construction, that they must necessarily have been interpreted differently, and with almost equal degrees of plausibility, by the colonies and the government. It was the true policy of the government to avoid every thing that would provoke discussion on the subject, since, whatever the merits of the case might be, any agitation of the question would necessarily stimulate the existing tendency to independence.

The error of the British ministry lay in assuming a principle, which, whether in itself true or false, could not fail, at all events, to provoke a controversy, and in not retracing their steps with sufficient firmness, when they saw how the act was received in America.

Starting from the period of the peace of 1763, when the feeling of cordiality toward the mother country was strong and universal, had the British ministry pursued uniformly a conciliatory course, never advancing any pretension which was fitted to alarm the jealousy of the colonies, encouraging, instead of crushing, their home industry, governing them, in short, not with a view to the separate aggrandizement of Great Britain, but to the interest of the colonies themselves, and that of the mother country only as therein involved and implied; had the ministry taken such a course, the union with Great Britain might have lasted for an indefinite period, perhaps for centuries, and until the superior population and revenues of the colonies should have transferred the seat of the common government, by a natural process, to this side of the Atlantic. But such results would have been hardly consistent with the ordinary course of events. With the feelings on both sides that naturally grew out of their respective positions, it was much more natural that the British government should adopt some



such measure as the stamp act, and that its adoption should be followed by resistance from the colonies.

But although opposition, more or less energetic, was naturally to be expected, and was doubtless calculated on by the ministers, it is hardly probable that they anticipated the storm of resistance which burst upon them at once from all quarters of the continent. The declaratory resolution was met by remonstrances and protests from the colonial legislatures, transmitted through their agents at London, in which they denied entirely the right of the government to raise a revenue from the colonies. Shaken in some degree by their proceedings, the ministry intimated to the agents that they had no particular predilection for the proposed method of raising the money wanted, and that they would abandon the idea of laying stamp duties if the agents would suggest any other mode of obtaining the amount which these duties were expected to yield, and which was only a hundred thousand pounds. So trifling was the pecuniary interest actually at stake in the quarrel, which was destined to dismember the British empire. The agents rejected these overtures, and insisted firmly on the constitutional right of British subjects not to be taxed excepting with their own consent through their representatives.

Failing in these attempts at conciliation, the ministry adhered to their original plan. Soon after the opening of Parliament, in January, 1765, they carried through the two Houses, by unanimous consent, a resolution not to receive any memorials which denied the right of the government to tax the colonies; and soon after proposed, and carried by large majorities, the famous stamp act. On the actual passage of this obnoxious law, the feeling of discontent which had been kept in some degree within bounds, by the hope that Parliament would refrain from following out the course indicated by the resolution of the preceding session, now burst forth with uncontrollable fury. On the arrival of the intelligence of the passage of the law at Boston, the ships in port displayed their flags at half mast as signals of distress; the bells were muffled and tolled as at a funeral. The act was publicly burned. The ship-masters who had brought out the stamps were compelled to give them up, and they were immediately destroyed, so that, on the 1st of November, when the act went into operation, there was not one to be found in the colonies.

The merchants entered into mutual compacts not to import any goods from Great Britain while the law remained in force. As the use of stamped paper was rendered necessary by the

act in almost all matters of business, public or private, the destruction of the supply, which had been transmitted, interrupted the progress of all current affairs. The courts of justice were closed, and the people were left at full leisure to devote their whole time and attention to the all-absorbing subject. The rapidity with which the feeling that prevailed through the colonies changed, in a single year, from unprecedented cordiality to unmitigated abhorrence, is almost miraculous. It evinces a keen sensibility to any interference with their real or supposed political rights, and a resolute determination to maintain them, singularly characteristic of the race from which they sprang, but which had never, perhaps, been displayed with greater energy at the most trying periods in the history of the mother country.

The legislature of Virginia, immediately after receiving intelligence of the adoption of the declaratory resolution by Parliament, prepared addresses, directed severally to the King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, in which they remonstrated with spirit and decision, but still in a tone of moderation, against any actual legislation on this basis. These addresses corresponded in character with the feeling which prevailed in the colonies at the time of their adoption, and which was still friendly and loyal

towards the mother country, although in some degree altered by the prospect of the measures that were threatened. The actual passage of the stamp act seems to have obliterated entirely the remains of the previously existing sentiment, and to have substituted in its place the most intense excitement, and a resolute determination to resist to the utmost, and at all hazards, the ministerial pretensions. The boldest and most energetic patriots were naturally called into action by the nature of the crisis.

In Virginia, the friends of liberty fixed their eyes immediately upon the young advocate, who had recently acquired so much reputation by his brilliant eloquence and undaunted defence of colonial rights against the encroachments of the crown, at the regular election of members of the House of Burgesses for the year 1765. Henry does not seem to have been thought of as a candidate; but, after the adoption of the stamp act was known, Mr. William Johnson, the member elect for the county of Louisa, accepted the place of coroner in order to create a vacancy. A writ was issued on the 1st of May for a new election, and before the 20th it appears that Henry had taken his seat in the Assembly, which was in session at the time, as on that day he was added to the committee for courts of justice. On making his appearance in the Assembly, he

exhibited the same plain and rather uncouth exterior which had previously distinguished him. It now formed a rather striking contrast with the stately deportment and finished elegance of manner, which characterized the leading members of the landed aristocracy of Virginia.

It was probably not anticipated by the friends of Henry, that he would lead the proceedings of the Assembly on the stamp act. Richard Henry Lee, Pendleton, Wythe, Bland, and others, who afterwards took an active and prominent part in the contest with the mother country, were members of this body, and, from their superiority in years and authority, if not in talent and eloquence, to Henry, were naturally expected to assume the responsibility of pointing out the course to be pursued. Henry, as a young and powerful advocate, was calculated on to sustain and recommend to the people the measures proposed by the leaders. These very natural expectations were, as we shall presently see, entirely disappointed.

The first affair in which Henry took a part was far from exhibiting any very strong tendency in him to follow the lead of the landed aristocracy. Although it had no immediate connection with the exciting political topics of the day, it was in itself of an interesting character; and, in more quiet times, would have probably ab-



sorbed for some years the attention of the colony. It was a proposal made in the Assembly to convert the state treasury into a sort of land bank, by authorizing the treasurer to lend the public money to individuals on good landed security. Whether these loans were to be made in a paper money, resting on the public faith, to be created for the purpose, or in the usual currency of the colony, is not stated in the accounts that have come down to us of this transaction.

The treasurer of the colony at this period was John Robinson, who was also at the same time, and had been for five and twenty years preceding, the speaker of the Assembly. He was a person of large property and excellent character, by general acknowledgment the leader of the landed interest. Profuse in his expenditures, and liberal in his disposition, he had been in the habit of lending money very freely to such persons as wished to borrow, employing indiscriminately, for this purpose, his own funds and those of the state. By a long perseverance in this system his affairs had become confused, and he began to apprehend that he should find himself unable to meet his payments on public account. The real object of the proposed measure was to enable him to settle his affairs, by transferring the loans which he had made on his own responsibility, though with the public money, to the

credit of the state. As the irregularity of the manner in which Robinson had managed the affairs of the treasury was not known until after his death, which took place a year later, the real object of the proposed measure was not at the time suspected by the public. The plan seems to have been favored by the leading members of the Assembly, who naturally anticipated that the loans to be made would fall, in part at least, into their hands.

It was in opposition to this plan that Henry made his first speech in the House of Burgesses. The ultimate object not being known, he could, of course, attack it only on the general ground of objections, which are sufficiently obvious ; such as the danger, inconvenience, and radical impropriety, of employing the public money in private banking operations, and the abuses to which such a system would necessarily lead. No report is extant of this speech. Mr. Jefferson, who heard the debate, speaks of it as an effort of great ability, and quotes a single remark, which made at the time a very strong impression on himself and the House. It had been urged by the friends of the measure, that certain persons of substantial property had been led by circumstances to contract debts, which, if exacted immediately, would bring ruin upon them and their families, but that, with a little indulgence in

point of time, these debts might be paid with ease, and that this project would furnish the persons so situated with the accommodation which they wanted. "What, Sir," said Henry, in commenting upon this remark, which seems to have been a covert allusion to the case of Robinson himself; "What, Sir, is it proposed, then, to reclaim the spendthrift from his dissipation and extravagance by filling his pockets with money?" "These expressions," says Jefferson, in his letter to Wirt, "are indelibly impressed upon my memory." As the remark here quoted, though just and pointed, has nothing particularly striking or brilliant about it, it is easy to judge how much the effect of Henry's speeches, as is the case, indeed, with those of every celebrated orator, must have depended on the manner in which they were delivered. The opposition of Henry to the projected plan was successful. He carried with him all the members of the upper country, who constituted a considerable majority over the aristocracy of the lower country.

The next year Robinson died, and the disclosure of the deficit in his accounts with the state, which exhibited the true character of this proposal, fully justifies the opposition of Henry, and reflected honor on his foresight and sagacity. He assumed at this time the position, which he continued to hold through his whole career, of a

popular tribune, who made it his business to attempt to secure the rights of the mass of the community against invasion by the wealthy and powerful. This might not have been, in ordinary times, a course very well fitted to secure to him the highest emoluments and advantages held out by his profession, as it naturally rendered him obnoxious to the landed proprietors, who held most of the property, and disposed of all the patronage of the crown in the colony. But, under the peculiar circumstances of the crisis, it proved perhaps more favorable to his influence than any other that he could have adopted. The progress of events very soon transferred the patronage of the colony from the hands of the aristocracy to those of the popular leaders, and compelled the former not merely not to oppose Henry, but to march, though not with a very good will, under his banner. This result was seen in the proceedings of the Assembly at this session upon the stamp act.

The leading men appear to have made up their minds, that it was unnecessary to add anything, at this session, to the addresses which had been adopted at the preceding one, and, up to the third day before the session was to terminate, had shown no intention to propose any new measure. It was at this period that Henry introduced his celebrated resolutions. At some subsequent time,

he made, himself, a statement in writing of the circumstances under which they were obtained. The document is the more curious, as it is the only source from which our knowledge of one of the resolutions is derived. After the decease of Henry, a parcel was found among his papers, with this superscription ; "Enclosed are the resolutions of the Virginia Assembly, in 1765, concerning the stamp act. Let my executors, publish this paper." The parcel contained a copy of the resolutions, with some remarks written upon the back of it, the whole in Henry's hand-writing. The resolutions are as follows ;

"Resolved, That the first adventurers and settlers of this his Majesty's colony and dominion brought with them, and transmitted to their posterity, and all others, his Majesty's subjects, since inhabiting in this his Majesty's said colony, all the privileges, franchises, and immunities, that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed, by the people of Great Britain.

"Resolved, That, by two royal charters, granted by King James the First, the colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all the privileges, liberties, and immunities of denizens and natural-born subjects, to all intents and purposes, as if they had been abiding and born within the realm of England.

"Resolved, That the taxation of the people



by themselves; or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, and the easiest mode of raising them, and are equally affected by such taxes themselves, is the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, and without which the ancient constitution cannot subsist.

“Resolved, That his Majesty’s liege people of this most ancient colony have uninterruptedly enjoyed the right of being thus governed by their own Assembly, in the article of their taxes and internal police; and that the same hath never been forfeited, or any other way given up, but hath been constantly recognized by the king and people of Great Britain.

“Resolved, therefore, That the General Assembly of this colony have the sole right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatsoever, other than the General Assembly aforesaid, has a manifest tendency to destroy British, as well as American, freedom.”

The endorsement, also in Henry’s hand-writing, on the paper containing these resolutions, is as follows;

“The within resolutions passed the House of Burgesses in May, 1765. They formed the first

opposition to the stamp act, and the scheme of taxing America by the British Parliament. All the colonies, either through fear or want of opportunity to form an opposition, or from influences of some kind or other, had remained silent. I had been, for the first time, elected a burgess a few days before ; was young, inexperienced, unacquainted with the forms of the House, and the members that composed it. Finding the men of weight averse to opposition, and the commencement of the tax at hand, and that no person was likely to step forth, I determined to venture ; and, alone, unadvised, on a blank leaf of an old law book, wrote the within. Upon offering them to the House, violent debates ensued. Many threats were uttered, and much abuse cast on me by the party for submission. After a long and warm contest, the resolutions passed by a very small majority, perhaps of one or two only. The alarm spread throughout America with astonishing quickness, and the ministerial party were overwhelmed. The great point of resistance to British taxation was universally established in the colonies. This brought on the war, which finally separated the two countries, and gave independence to ours. Whether this will prove a blessing or a curse, will depend upon the use our people make of the blessings which a gracious God hath bestowed upon us.

If they are wise, they will be great and happy. If they are of a contrary character, they will be miserable. Righteousness alone can exalt them as a nation.

“Reader! whoever thou art, remember this; and, in thy sphere, practise virtue thyself, and encourage it in others. P. HENRY.”

Such is the account, given by Henry himself, of the passage of these resolutions. It is known, also, from himself, through the channel of his brother-in-law, Judge Winston, that, before they were offered, they were shown to two persons only, John Fleming and George Johnston, members respectively for the counties of Cumberland and Fairfax, by the latter of whom they were seconded. They were opposed, with great earnestness by the prominent members, who generally led the proceedings, and, on most occasions, as a matter of course, commanded a majority. The reader will naturally desire to see the account of the proceedings, as given in the graphic and spirited language of Jefferson, who was present at the debate.

“Mr. Henry moved, and Mr. Johnston seconded, these resolutions, successively. They were opposed by Messrs. Randolph, Bland, Pendleton, Wythe, and all the old members, whose influence in the House had till then been unbroken. They did it, not from any question of our

rights, but on the ground that the same sentiments had been, at the preceding session, expressed in a more conciliatory form, to which the answers were not yet received. But torrents of sublime eloquence from Henry, backed by the solid reasoning of Johnston, prevailed. The last, however, and strongest resolution, was carried but by a single vote. The debate on it was most bloody. I was then but a student, and stood at the door of communication between the house and the lobby, (for as yet there was no gallery,) during the whole debate and vote; and I well remember, that, after the numbers on the division were told and declared from the chair, Peyton Randolph, the attorney-general, came out at the door where I was standing, and said, as he entered the lobby, 'I would have given five hundred guineas for a single vote;' for one vote would have divided the house, and Robinson was in the chair, who, he knew, would have negatived the resolution.

"Mr. Henry left town that evening; and the next morning, before the meeting of the House, Colonel Peter Randolph, then of the council, came to the hall of burgesses, and sat at the clerk's table till the house bell rang, thumbing over the volumes of journals, to find a precedent for expunging a vote of the House, which, he said, had taken place while he was a member or clerk of

the House, I do not recollect which. I stood by him, at the end of the table, a considerable part of the time, looking on as he turned the leaves; but I do not recollect whether he found the erasure. In the mean time, some of the timid members, who had voted for the strongest resolution, had become alarmed; and, as soon as the House met, a motion was made and carried to expunge it from the journals. There being, at that day, but one printer, and he entirely under control of the governor, I do not know that this resolution ever appeared in print. I write this from memory; but the impression made on me, at the time, was such as to fix the facts indelibly in my mind. I suppose the original journal was among those destroyed by the British, or its obliterated face might be appealed to. And here I will state, that Burk's statement of Mr. Henry's consenting to withdraw two resolutions, by way of compromise with his opponents, is entirely erroneous."

Mr. Jefferson's suggestion, that the manuscript journal was probably destroyed by the British during the war, has been ascertained to be erroneous, as the book disappeared very soon after the close of the session of 1765. There are various errors, besides the one mentioned by Mr. Jefferson, in the account of Burk, and some in that of Marshall, in the first volume of the Life



of Washington. Fortunately, the original note of Henry, and the account of Jefferson, enable us to form a perfectly correct, as well as singularly clear and distinct, notion of this thrilling scene. Jefferson standing as a listener at the door of the House of Burgesses, and imbibing, from the "torrents of Henry's sublime eloquence," the patriotic inspiration, which was destined, only ten years afterwards, to glow in his own draft of the Declaration of Independence, would furnish a noble subject for the historical painter, and one which would open plainly to the eye some of the powerful, but then hidden, springs of the coming revolution.

Of the speech or speeches made by Henry in this debate, there is no satisfactory record. Burk, in his History, gives what purports to be his speech; but it is the mere outline of an argument, resting, probably, on recollection, with the exception of a single passage at the close, the correctness of which is well authenticated, and which contributed greatly, at the time, by giving effect and poignancy to the whole speech, to produce the desired result. According to this outline, Henry considered the pretence of the ministry to raise a revenue in this country as conflicting with the colonial charters, with the rights of the people as British subjects, and with their natural rights as men. At the close, he

dwelt upon the danger to which the king himself would be exposed, in pursuing his present course. "Cæsar," said he, "had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third —" At this moment, the orator paused, as if in doubt how to finish the sentence. The natural termination seemed, of course, to be, that George the Third would come, like them, to a violent end; and the members opposed to Henry immediately raised a loud cry of "Treason, treason," in all parts of the house. Henry, in no way disconcerted, but appearing, on the contrary, to gather new power from the excitement of the scene, assumed a more erect position, and, fastening his eagle eye upon the speaker, the same John Robinson, whose corrupt plans he had so signally baffled a few days before, added, in the most appropriate emphasis, as the closing words of the phrase, "may profit by their example." He then paused again, for some seconds, and finally subjoined, as a sort of commentary on the outcry that had just occurred, "If this be treason, make the most of it."

Such was the first appearance of Henry as an orator on purely political topics; and it is a rather singular circumstance, that, in this department, as in that of legal practice, no subsequent effort seems to have surpassed, or even quite

equalled, in immediate effect, the first. His speech in the Continental Congress, soon after its organization, called forth the strongest admiration; many of his speeches in the Virginia Convention, on the federal constitution, were received with unbounded enthusiasm, and produced very extraordinary results. His argument in the British Debt case, which occupied three days, is analyzed at great length by Mr. Wirt, and dwelt upon as a sort of masterpiece. But, even at the present time, a Virginian, who is requested to mention the leading titles of Henry's glory, appeals, without hesitation, to the speeches on the Stamp Act and the Parsons' Cause. The peculiar circumstances attending each of these cases may have contributed something to give them their comparative importance; but, independently of any other cause, there is a certain freshness in the first efforts of a powerful mind, which gives them an advantage over those of later years, that, on careful analysis, may appear, as works of science and art, fully equal, if not superior.

It is remarked by Lord Byron, in one of his private memoranda or letters, that he awoke one morning and found himself famous. Henry had taken his seat in the Assembly, notwithstanding the eclat of the Parsons' Cause, a still comparatively obscure country attorney, at best a rising

lawyer of great promise. He returned to his home, three or four weeks after, by universal acknowledgment, the first statesman and orator in Virginia.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*Repeal of the Stamp Act. — Henry elected to the Continental Congress. — Speech in the Virginia Convention.*

THE unfortunate measure, which had produced such a ferment throughout the colonies, and which exercised so important an influence on their relations with the mother country, was destined itself to be of short duration. Within a year after the passage of the stamp act, a change took place in the administration of the British government. The Grenville cabinet, in which the tory influence predominated, was compelled to retire; and a new one was formed, on whig principles, under the direction of the Marquis of Rockingham. It was on this occasion that Burke, who had previously been private secretary to the marquis, took his seat in Parliament. It may be proper to remark, that,

although the Grenville administration was ostensibly responsible for the passage of the stamp act, Mr. Grenville himself is said to have been individually averse to it, and to have proposed it very unwillingly, in compliance with the positive command of the king, who was the real author of the measure. However this may be, the new ministry, who, as members of Parliament, had opposed the adoption of this policy, very naturally evinced a disposition to recede from it. The speech from the throne, at the opening of the session, breathed a conciliatory spirit in regard to America; and, in the debate upon it in the House of Commons, Mr. Pitt attacked the policy of the late administration with great power. A bill was introduced, soon after, for the repeal of the stamp act, which, though strongly opposed, passed the two Houses by large majorities, and became a law. At the same time, another law was passed, declaratory of the right of Parliament to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever.

This prompt and apparently good-humored retreat from the course, which had been so injudiciously entered upon, gave entire satisfaction throughout the colonies, and restored for a moment the cordial feeling towards the mother country, that prevailed at the close of the war. Public rejoicings, including expressions of the



warmest gratitude to the friends of the colonies, at home and abroad, took place in all quarters. The Virginia Assembly voted an address of thanks to the King and Parliament, in which they renewed all their former professions of attachment and loyalty. They also resolved to erect a statue of the King, and an obelisk in honor of the British statesmen who had supported the cause of America. A bill was introduced for this purpose; but, in consequence of the less favorable aspect which the affair shortly after assumed in England, it was never acted on.

Had the British government, at this period, persevered, with consistency and good faith, in the policy which apparently dictated the repeal of the stamp act, there can be no doubt, that the good feeling produced by that repeal would have been maintained, and would have prevailed for a long time in the relations between the two parties. But this was not the case; and the course actually pursued was one which it would be as difficult to reconcile with any consistent scheme of administration, as with a prudent regard to the rights and feelings of the colonies.

Occasional concessions gave an appearance of weakness and indecision to the action of the ministry, while the extreme severity displayed on other occasions irritated the minds of the

Americans almost to frenzy. Not content with annexing to the repeal of the stamp act a declaratory law, which was fitted of itself to give an ungracious aspect to the whole proceeding, the ministry seem to have taken particular pains to disavow any intention for which the colonies could properly be grateful, and publicly treated with contempt the demonstrations of satisfaction which had, in fact, been shown in America. Townshend, the new chancellor of the exchequer, remarked, in a speech made the following year, in the debate on the supplies, "that he had voted for the repeal of the stamp act, not because it was not a good act, but because there appeared to be a propriety in repealing it.. He added, that he repeated the sentiment in order that the galleries might hear him; and that, after this, he did not expect to have his statue erected in America." In accordance with these views, the plan of raising a revenue in the colonies was immediately revived. A law was passed, the same year, imposing new duties upon various articles, when imported into the colonies, and particularly *tea*; and, in order to show the settled determination of the ministry to persist, at all hazards, in their pretensions, additional troops were sent to America, and quartered in the principal northern cities.

This headstrong spirit in the cabinet could

not well produce any other results than such as those which followed, and which are familiarly known as a part of the general history of the country. Virginia, though prominent in resistance to the stamp act, seems to have been treated with less severity than some of the other colonies. This is attributed, by Mr. Wirt, to the personal character of the Virginian governors, Fauquier and Botetourt, who are represented as having endeavored to maintain, as far as possible, a good understanding between the parties; while it seems to have been the object of the Bernards and Hutchinsons, of the eastern states, to envenom existing animosities, and push them as rapidly as possible to extremities. The greater consideration, which was extended by the mother country to the colony of Virginia, tended probably to diminish a little, on her side, the activity of opposition.

On the repeal of the stamp act, the Assembly, as remarked above, adopted resolutions of a highly loyal character; and it does not appear that any new proceedings took place in reference to the relations with the mother country until the session of 1768-9. On the last day of that session, a series of resolutions was adopted, asserting in emphatic terms the right of the colony to be exempt from all taxes excepting such as might be imposed by her own legislature, and

remonstrating vigorously against the recent acts of the British government. The result of this measure was an immediate dissolution of the House of Assembly by the governor. The members were all reëlected, and returned with augmented ardor to the post of duty. The next step, in the course of resistance to the arbitrary pretensions of the ministry, was the adoption by the Assembly of a series of resolutions, moved by Dabney Carr, and providing for the appointment of a committee of the legislature to correspond with the legislatures of the other colonies. The measure was moved in committee of the whole on the 12th of March, 1773, and was the first movement made in any part of the country towards a concert of action between the colonies.

Henry had constantly been a member of the House from the time of his first election, and took, no doubt, an active part on both these occasions, although no particular account has been preserved of his course in regard to the resolutions of 1768-9. He supported those of Mr. Carr in a powerful speech, and was appointed a member of the Committee of Correspondence. He seems, at this time, to have become somewhat more studious, in regard to the decorum of his external appearance, than he had formerly been; and is described by one

who was present at the debate on Carr's resolutions as wearing a peach-blossom-colored coat, and dark wig, terminating in a bag, according to the fashion of that day. He was now in full practice at the bar, and was particularly conspicuous in the defence of criminal cases, where he shone without a rival. In civil actions, involving the technical book learning of the profession, he was still unable to cope on equal terms with the leading barristers, and only recovered his advantage, and displayed his full strength, when the question was of such a nature that he was at liberty to appeal to the great principles of natural justice.

But events of high importance were now succeeding each other with a rapidity, which left to those who took an active part in political affairs but little leisure for professional pursuits or private business of any description. The attempt to enforce the new duty on tea was met by the destruction of the first cargo that arrived at Boston, while yet on board the ship in which it came. In retribution for this act of summary justice, the British government withdrew from that town its privileges as a port of entry, by the law commonly called the Boston Port Bill. The situation of Boston under this infliction called forth public expressions of the warmest sympathy from various quarters. The Virginia legislature



was in session at the time when intelligence of the enactment of the Boston Port Bill reached this country. The bill was to take effect on the first of June, 1774. The Assembly immediately passed an order setting apart that day to be observed as a season of public fasting, humiliation, and prayer. In consequence of this order, Governor Dunmore on the following day dissolved the House. The members forthwith repaired to the Raleigh tavern, and, after deliberating on the course which it was proper to pursue under existing circumstances, unanimously adopted an Association, which contained a proposal for the meeting of a General Congress.

In pursuance of these proceedings, delegates were elected shortly after by the several counties, to meet, on the 1st of August following, for the purpose of considering further of the state of public affairs, and particularly of appointing deputies to the General Congress. The delegates accordingly assembled at Williamsburg, at the appointed time, and proceeded to transact the business committed to them. They adopted resolutions, in which they pledge themselves to make common cause with Boston at all hazards, and to suspend all commercial intercourse with Great Britain, until the existing difficulties should be adjusted. As deputies to the General Congress they designated Peyton Randolph, Richard

Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton. The president of the Convention, Peyton Randolph, was authorized to call another meeting, if occasion should require.

Notwithstanding the lengths to which the controversy with the mother country had now proceeded, and the bitterness of feeling which had been generated by it, the idea of complete independence was still admitted with reluctance by the greater part of even the more active patriots, and had not become familiar to the people at large. A few persons only, of deeper thought and a keener foresight into future events than the rest, already perceived that this result was inevitable. Patrick Henry was one of the number, and Mr. Wirt has recorded a very interesting conversation that occurred about this time, in which Henry developed his views, with his characteristic boldness, and with almost prophetic sagacity ; the substance of which is here related.

The conversation was held at the house of Colonel Samuel Overton, who, in the presence of several other gentlemen, inquired of Henry whether he supposed that Great Britain would drive her colonies to extremities ; and, if so, what would be the issue of the war. " Sir," said Henry in reply, after looking round the company

to see that none but confidential persons were present, "she will drive us to extremities; no accommodation will take place; hostilities will soon commence, and a desperate and bloody contest it will be." "Do you think," continued Overton, "that, destitute as we are of arms, ammunition, ships of war, and money to procure them, we can possibly make any effectual resistance to the forces which Great Britain will send against us?" "To be candid with you," replied Henry, "I doubt whether we should be able to cope single-handed with so formidable an adversary; but," continued he, rising from his seat, with great vivacity, "do you suppose that France, Spain, and Holland, the natural enemies of Great Britain, will look on quietly and see us crushed? Will Louis the Sixteenth be asleep at such a crisis? No, Sir! When he shall be satisfied, by the vigor of our resistance, and by our *declaration of independence*, that we are in earnest, he will furnish us with supplies, send us fleets and armies to fight our battles for us, and make a treaty, offensive and defensive, with us against our unnatural mother. Spain and Holland will join the alliance; our independence will be established, and we shall take our place among the nations of the earth."

On the 5th of September, 1774, the deputies to the General Congress met at Carpenter's Hall,

in Philadelphia. Peyton Randolph was chosen president. After the formal organization had been completed, the proceedings were opened by a speech from Henry, which was followed by another from Richard Henry Lee. No report of these speeches has been preserved, but they are represented by Mr. Wirt, on the authority of those who heard them, as having been in the highest degree powerful and impressive. Committees were shortly after appointed to prepare a petition to the king, an address to the people of England, and another to the inhabitants of British America. In consequence of their general reputation, as well as of the splendid display of eloquence which they had already made, Henry and Lee were intrusted respectively with the duty of preparing the first and second of these documents. It appeared, however, in the sequel, that the capacity of these gentlemen for literary composition and regular argument was not upon a level with their gift in speech. The drafts which they reported gave, in both cases, so little satisfaction, that they were recommitted, and others substituted for them, the petition to the king having been drafted by Mr. Jay, and the address to the people of England by Mr. Dickinson.

Judge Chase, of Maryland, who was a member of this Congress, on hearing the first speeches of



Henry and Lee, walked across the floor to the seat of his colleague, and said to him, in an under tone, "We may as well go home; we are not able to legislate with these men." After their talent for transacting the public affairs had been tested, the judge was heard to remark, "I find, after all, they are but men, and, in mere matters of business, but very common men."

No account has been preserved of any further proceedings of Henry in this Congress, which closed its sittings in October. On his return home, Henry was, of course, surrounded by his neighbors, who were eager to learn the particulars of the debates, and inquired, among other things, whom he thought the greatest man in Congress. "If you speak of eloquence," replied Henry, "Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, is by far the greatest orator; but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor." Washington, though still comparatively young, had already developed, in a protracted career of service, his eminent capacity for military affairs, and the practical despatch of business; he had been for many years a member of the Assembly, and had exhibited, under all circumstances, and on various trying occasions, the moral elevation of character, which was the



great secret of his subsequent influence and success.

On the 20th of March, 1775, the Virginia Convention, which had met the preceding year at Williamsburg, came together, for the second time, at Richmond. Henry was a member of this body. It has already been remarked, that the public opinion and feeling throughout the colonies were not yet prepared for a declaration of independence. This was evinced, so far as Virginia was concerned, by the terms of the instructions given by the Williamsburg Convention to their deputies in Congress, which, in connection with a vigorous and plain-spoken statement of grievances, breathe a spirit of loyalty to the king and attachment to the mother country.

A similar tone marked the proceedings of the Congress itself; and, when the Williamsburg Convention met for the second time, the prevailing sentiment among the members was apparently pacific and conciliatory. The two first days were employed in passing resolves of a merely formal and complimentary character in honor of the deputies to Congress, and of the legislature of Jamaica, which had presented a petition to the king in favor of the claims of the colonies. These proceedings appeared to Henry altogether too tame for the exigencies of the crisis. He had made up his mind that the time

for conciliation was over, and that the controversy had reached the point, where there was no other issue but an appeal to actual force. Preparation for the military defence of the colony was, of course, in this view, the only appropriate measure, and Henry conceived that the activity of the Convention ought to take this direction. He accordingly moved the following resolutions ;

“Resolved, That a well-regulated militia, composed of gentlemen and yeomen, is the natural strength and only security of a free government ; that such a militia in this colony would for ever render it unnecessary for the mother country to keep among us, for the purpose of our defence, any standing army of mercenary soldiers, always subversive of the quiet and dangerous to the liberties of the people, and would obviate the pretext of taxing us for their support.

“That the establishment of such a militia is at this time peculiarly necessary, by the state of our laws, for the protection and defence of the country, some of which are already expired, and others will shortly be so ; and that the known remissness of government, in calling us together in a legislative capacity, renders it too insecure, in this time of danger and distress, to rely that opportunity will be given of renewing them in General Assembly, or making any provision to secure our inestimable rights and liber-

ties from those further violations with which they are threatened.

“Resolved, therefore, That this colony be immediately put into a state of defence, and that a committee be raised to prepare a plan for embodying, arming, and disciplining such a number of men as may be sufficient for that purpose.”

On this occasion, as in the debate on the Stamp Act, the views of Henry were not only far in advance of the general sentiment of the country, but went beyond those of the most active patriots in the Convention. Bland, Harrison, and Pendleton, who had been members of Congress, with Robert C. Nicholas, one of the ablest and most respected citizens, resisted with all their might the passage of these resolutions. They urged, in opposition to them, with great eloquence, the more conciliatory temper that had lately been professed by the king and his ministers, the utter hopelessness of a contest with Great Britain, the intimate and endearing character of the ties that had hitherto connected the colonies with the mother country, and the advantages of various kinds which had accrued to both the parties from the connection.

It is apparent, from the arguments which they employed, that these eminent statesmen and patriots still clung with confidence to the hope of

preserving the union. Henry replied to their arguments, and sustained his resolutions in a speech which is given by Mr. Wirt in a report furnished by Judge Tucker, who heard it delivered. This is one of the most powerful specimens, that have come down to us, of Henry's eloquence. It is inserted here from the report of Judge Tucker, with the substitution of the first for the third person.

“No man can think more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if, entertaining, as I do, opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely, and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the House is one of awful moment to the country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery. And in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfil the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offence, I



should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty towards the majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

“Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of Hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those, who having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

“I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry, for the last ten years, to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the House. Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, Sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed by a kiss. Ask yourselves how



this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations, which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled, that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, Sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, Sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, Sir, she has none. They are meant for us; they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains, which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find, which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, Sir, deceive ourselves longer. Sir, we have done

everything that could be done, to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned ; we have remonstrated ; we have supplicated ; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the Ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted ; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult ; our supplications have been disregarded ; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne. In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. *There is no longer any room for hope.* If we wish to be free ; if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending ; if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained ; we must fight ! I repeat it, Sir, we must fight ! An appeal to arms, and to the God of hosts, is all that is left us.

“ They tell us, Sir, that we are weak ; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger ? Will it be the next week or the next year ? Will it be when we are

totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, Sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God, who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, Sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, Sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery. Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston. The war is inevitable; and let it come! I repeat it, Sir, let it come!

“It is vain, Sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, peace; but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next

gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but, as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

This spirited and powerful speech determined the character of the proceedings of the Convention. After another eloquent speech from Richard Henry Lee, in support of the resolutions, a committee, of which Henry and Washington were among the members, was appointed to prepare and report a plan for the organization of the militia. The report was accordingly made, and the plan adopted; after which, and the transaction of some other business of less importance, the Convention closed its session.

## CHAPTER V.

*Military Movements.*—*Henry appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Virginia Forces.*—*Resigns his Commission.*—*Elected the first Governor under the new Constitution.*

UNDER the present system of conducting political and military affairs in the Christian world, it rarely happens that the same persons, whose opinions in council and eloquence in debate determine the commencement of hostile relations between two countries, are called upon themselves to share the personal hardships and dangers of the conflict. The political leaders, who direct the concerns of nations, content themselves, in general, with declaring wars, and leave it to others to carry them on. It has sometimes been thought that this division of labor has a tendency to render wars more frequent, and that statesmen would be less prompt in urging a resort to arms, if the blood which is to flow were to be their own. However this may be, it was pretty soon apparent that Patrick Henry was not one of those persons, who are disposed to shrink themselves from the dangers to which they may deem it necessary to expose their countrymen. We have thus far seen him



engaged in the various civil employments of cultivator, merchant, lawyer, and statesman. At the next stage in his career, we find him assuming the character of a military leader, and discharging its duties with a spirit and efficiency which seem to show that, if circumstances of a wholly accidental nature had not checked his progress, his energies would probably have taken this direction, and given him as high a rank among the warriors of his country as he has in fact obtained among her orators and statesmen.

When the state of the controversy with the mother country began to render it probable, that it would be necessary to resort to arms, the Governors of the several colonies, either in consequence of instructions from home, or of a concert among themselves, attempted, at about the same time, to get possession of the military stores at all the various points at which they had been collected. On the 20th of April, 1775, the day following the celebrated 19th of April, which was distinguished by the attempt of Governor Gage, in Massachusetts, to seize the military stores at Cambridge and Concord in Massachusetts, a similar proceeding took place in Virginia under the direction of Lord Dunmore. About midnight, Captain Collins, of the armed schooner *Magdalen*, then lying at Burwell's Ferry, on James River, entered the city of Williamsburg,

at the head of a body of marines, and carried away from the public magazine about twenty barrels of powder, which he succeeded in getting on board his schooner before day.

The next morning, when the transaction was made known, it created great excitement among the inhabitants, and a considerable number of them mustered in arms for the purpose of compelling Captain Collins to restore the powder. The members of the municipal government, with some difficulty, restrained this tumultuous movement; but afterwards, in their corporate capacity, addressed a memorial to Lord Dunmore on the subject. The Governor returned a verbal answer, in which he stated, that, having heard of an insurrection in a neighboring county, he had thought it necessary to remove the powder to a place of safety, but assured the petitioners, upon his word of honor, that, whenever it was wanted for any proper purpose, it should be delivered. This assurance, supported by the influence of Peyton Randolph, R. C. Nicholas, and other prominent and popular citizens, restored for a time the public tranquillity.

In the course of the following night, however, a false report was circulated that a body of marines had again landed from the Magdalen, at some distance from the city, for the purpose of plunder. The inhabitants again rose in arms,

and, by the intervention of the same eminent patriots, were a second time persuaded to lay them aside. The next day, when tranquillity was entirely restored, the Governor sent a message into the city by one of the magistrates, to inform the people that, if they offered the least violence to his secretary, Captain Foy, or to Captain Collins, he would set the slaves at liberty, and lay the town in ashes. This threat, issued without any apparent necessity, since the two officers whom it was intended to protect had been quietly walking the streets without molestation throughout the whole disturbance, increased the irritation of the inhabitants, which did not, however, at the moment, show itself in any further act of open insurrection.

While the accounts of these proceedings were rapidly circulating throughout the colony, intelligence came on from the east of the events of the 19th of April at Lexington and Concord. The effect was electrical. The volunteer companies, which had recently been formed, for purposes of discipline, under the direction of Lord Dunmore himself, assembled in arms in every county. By the 27th of April, seven hundred men, well armed and disciplined, styling themselves friends of constitutional liberty and America, were collected at Fredericksburg, with the intention of marching to the capital. This movement was

checked by an express, received from Peyton Randolph on the 29th of April, stating that the gentlemen of Williamsburg and its neighborhood were satisfied with the result of the seizure of the powder, and advised the volunteers to proceed no farther. On the receipt of this express, a council was held, consisting of a hundred and two persons, officers of companies, or delegates to the provincial Convention, who, after expressing in the strongest terms their opinion of the Governor's proceedings, and their readiness to march at a moment's warning, whenever it might be necessary, in defence of their rights and liberty, recommended to their comrades to return, for the present, to their homes. They also sent off messengers, with advices to the same effect, to other meetings of a similar kind, which had been called in several other parts of the colony.

In this way, the movement was checked for the moment in every county, excepting Hanover, where Henry had again fixed his residence. Far from sharing the solicitude that seems to have been felt by the prominent patriots of Williamsburg to suppress any violent ebullitions of popular feeling, he was rather disposed to encourage them, and avowed to his confidential friends that he considered the seizure of the powder as a fortunate occurrence. Convinced that hostilities were inevitable, he was pleased with any



incident which naturally tended to awaken the military spirit of the colony, and induce the people to place themselves at once in a condition for effectual resistance. As soon as he received intelligence of the proceedings at Williamsburg, he immediately summoned the members of the volunteer company of Hanover county to meet him in arms at Newcastle, on the 2d of May, on business of urgent importance. He also called together the county committee at the same time and place.

At this meeting, after a powerful and eloquent address from Henry, on the topics appropriate to the occasion, it was decided to march at once to Williamsburg, and either recover the powder, or make reprisals to an equal amount upon the money in the public treasury. Captain Meredith, who commanded the volunteers, resigned his commission, and consented to serve as lieutenant under Henry, who was immediately elected captain, and without delay took up the line of march for Williamsburg. Ensign Goodall, in the mean time, was ordered to cross the country to King William county, which was the place of residence of the King's Receiver-General, Richard Corbin, and to obtain from him three hundred and thirty pounds, the estimated value of the powder, or to take him prisoner. The party reached the house of Mr. Corbin in the



night, and surrounded it for the purpose of preventing his escape. The next morning, they were assured by the ladies of the family that the Receiver-General was not in the house ; and, after satisfying themselves that the statement was correct, they left the place and rejoined Henry, agreeably to their orders, at Doncastle's ordinary, about sixteen miles above Williamsburg.

The movement of Henry created an intense excitement throughout the colony, and revived at once the military ardor which had been momentarily checked by the moderating influence of the patriots at Williamsburg. The volunteer companies rose again in all quarters, and marched across the country to join Henry. It is supposed that not less than five thousand men were on their way to meet him. The royalists were alarmed. The Governor immediately sent his family on board the Fowey man-of-war, which was lying in the harbor, and issued a proclamation, in which he denounced the movement as treasonable, and ordered the people to oppose and resist it. Even the prominent patriots inclined, as before, to a pacific course, and despatched several expresses in succession to Henry, for the purpose of persuading him to recede from his design, and disband his troops. Henry paid no attention to these remonstrances, but resolutely pursued his march, until, on arriving

at Doncastle's ordinary, he was met by a messenger from the Governor, bringing him a bill of exchange, drawn by the Receiver-General, for the value of the powder.

In the mean time, the marines from the Fowey had been landed, and apprehensions were entertained by some that they would make reprisals, for the money thus extorted by Henry, upon the public treasury. Henry, in consequence, addressed a letter to Mr. Nicholas, the treasurer of the colony, in which he offered, if it should be thought necessary or expedient, to detach from his own troops a guard sufficient for the protection of the treasury. Nicholas declined the offer, and Henry returned with his volunteers to Hanover. Two days after, the Governor issued a proclamation, denouncing the conduct of "a certain Patrick Henry" as treasonable, and cautioning the people not to give him any aid or countenance. No attempt was, however, made to institute legal proceedings against him, or to give him any personal molestation. Immediately after his return, he proceeded to Philadelphia to take his seat in Congress. He was escorted by a numerous cavalcade of his neighbors as far as the Potomac, and was met at every stage on his route by addresses and other demonstrations of the public regard. No accounts are preserved of his action at this session of Con-

gress ; and a series of events occurred soon after in Virginia, which called for his service in another capacity, and withdrew him from the field of national politics, to which he never after returned.

About this time the conciliatory propositions of Lord North arrived, and the Governor convoked a meeting of the House of Burgesses. He appeared to consider the troubles as entirely at an end, and brought back his lady and family from their retreat on board the Fowey to his residence at Williamsburg. Scarcely, however, had this arrangement been carried into effect, when he took alarm again at some fresh demonstration of patriotic feeling which occurred in the city, and withdrew with his family to the sloop of war, from which he never returned. The House of Burgesses remonstrated strongly against this proceeding, but, finding the Governor resolute, they at length adjourned to the 12th of October having first acted on and rejected the proposals of the British ministry. Before the adjournment, they summoned a meeting of the Virginia Convention, which assembled at Richmond on the 24th of July.

The proceedings of this body, of which Henry was a member, were marked with great vigor and decision. Assuming that the Governor, by retiring from the capital and taking up his residence

on board a ship of war, had virtually abdicated his authority, they constituted a Committee of Safety, to represent, in his absence, the executive branch of the government. An ordinance was also passed for a military organization of the colony, which provided, among other things, for raising two regiments of regular soldiers, to consist of one thousand and twenty privates, rank and file. The Convention next proceeded to elect officers for these regiments; and the choice they made shows, in a very striking manner, how strongly the public mind had been impressed by the vigor and efficiency of the late movement of Henry. Although till now wholly inexperienced in military affairs, he was appointed not only colonel of the first regiment, but commander-in-chief of all the forces raised, or to be raised, in Virginia. William Woodford, who had distinguished himself in the preceding war, was appointed colonel of the second regiment. Washington had already been appointed by Congress commander-in-chief of the continental army; and it does not appear that there was any other person in the colony, whose pretensions, on any other ground but that of mere seniority, could be supposed for a moment to outweigh the brilliant services of Henry, both civil and military.

It appears, however, from subsequent occurrences, that his appointment was not approved by



the older patriots, who probably felt some jealousy of the rapid progress which he had already made in the political career, and some disgust at the freedom with which he had opposed their views on the most important subjects. The Committee of Safety, which constituted, for the time, the executive power of the colony, was composed of this class of persons, under the presidency of Edmund Pendleton, with whom Henry had been brought into collision at the second meeting of the Convention. The arrangement of this body was such as to render it necessary for Henry to resign his commission as colonel and commander-in-chief very shortly after his appointment, and before he had had an opportunity to exhibit the extent of his capacity for this department of the public service.

In consequence of the measures adopted by the Convention for the military organization of the colony, Lord Dunmore considered it as in a state of rebellion, and employed himself, with the naval and military forces under his command, in harassing the settlements on the coast. At the close of October, Captain Squire, of the British sloop of war Otter, threatened an attack on Hampton, in consequence of which the inhabitants sent to the Committee of Safety, at Williamsburg, for relief. Colonel Woodford, of the second regiment, was immediately despatched with a com-



pany of riflemen to take command of the troops. The attack was repulsed without much difficulty. Lord Dunmore next directed his attention to the county of Norfolk, where his movements became so distressing, that it appeared indispensable to check his career. Colonel Woodford was the person called upon by the Committee of Safety to perform this service. He was ordered to cross James River, at Sandy Point, with eight hundred men, and bring Lord Dunmore to action.

Henry had been desirous to be employed himself on this expedition, and had expressed his wishes to the Committee of Safety. As commander-in-chief, it would seem that he had a right to decide at what point his own presence would be most useful; but the committee, without regard to this consideration, had given the preference to Woodford. Henry's reasons for dissatisfaction did not end here. Colonel Woodford, after having been despatched on this expedition, considered himself as under the immediate direction of the Committee of Safety, or of the Convention, when in session, and made no communications whatever to Henry. On the 6th of December, Henry wrote him a letter, stating, in civil terms, that he had received no despatches from him for a long time, and requesting to be informed of his situation and proceedings. Woodford sent him the desired information, but

remarked, at the same time, that, "when joined, he should always esteem himself immediately under the command of Henry, and would obey accordingly ; but, when sent to command a separate and distinct body of troops, under the immediate instructions of the Committee of Safety, whenever that body, or the honorable Convention, were sitting, he should look upon it as his indispensable duty to address his intelligence to them, as the supreme power in the colony."

The question, having thus been brought to a direct issue between the two officers, was referred by Henry to the decision of the Committee of Safety. In the mean time, Woodford had obtained a brilliant victory over the British at the Great Bridge, which, by stamping his appointment with the seal of success, would naturally confirm the confidence of the committee in their own judgment, and their preference for Woodford over Henry. The correctness of Henry's view of the subject was, however, too apparent to be seriously questioned, and the committee, notwithstanding their partiality for Woodford, adopted the following order ;

"*In Committee, December, 1775.* Resolved, unanimously, that Colonel Woodford, although acting upon a separate and detached command, ought to correspond with Colonel Henry, and make returns to him, at proper times, of the state

and condition of the forces under his command; and also that he is subject to his orders, when the Convention or the Committee of Safety is not sitting; but that, whilst either of those bodies is sitting, he is to receive his orders from one of them."

The letter of the chairman of the committee, Mr. Pendleton, enclosing this order to Woodford, is given by Mr. Wirt, and exhibits not only partiality for Woodford, but a feeling of positive unkindness towards Henry. "Believe me, Sir," says Pendleton, "the unlucky step of calling that gentleman from our councils, where he was useful, into the field in an important station, the duties of which he must, in the nature of things, be an entire stranger to, has given me many an anxious and uneasy moment." And, again, "We shall not intermeddle with the appointment of a general officer by Congress, lest it should be thought propriety requires our calling, or rather recommending, our present first officer to that station." There is some plausibility in the former suggestion; but Mr. Pendleton well knew that genius, like that of Henry, supplies, under all circumstances, the want of mere routine. His recent campaign, at the head of the Hanover volunteers, had sufficiently shown his capacity for actual service in the field.

A new aspect was given to the position of

Henry as commander-in-chief, by the arrival of a corps of auxiliary troops, which had been requested from North Carolina, and which consisted of five or six hundred men, commanded by Colonel Howe. This officer, whose commission was prior in date to that of Woodford, was permitted by the latter to take command of all the forces. In this capacity he addressed his communications, as Woodford had done, to the Committee of Safety or the Convention, without regard to the rights of Henry as commander-in-chief, who thus found himself set aside, and, as it were, superseded, by an officer from another colony of only equal rank. The spirit which prompted these proceedings was displayed in a still more decisive form.

Six regiments had been raised by the Convention, in addition to the two commanded by Henry and Woodford; and an application was made to Congress to take the Virginia troops into continental pay. In acting on this subject, Congress consented to the request in favor of the six additional regiments only. This singular discrimination was, doubtless, the result of a suggestion from the Committee of Safety, made for the purpose of disgusting Henry, and of preventing him from being regarded by Congress as a candidate for one of the higher commissions. At this point the Convention interfered in support of the



commander-in-chief of their election, and remonstrated vigorously against the proceedings of Congress, and requested that, if six regiments only could be taken into the continental service, the two that were first raised might be placed first on the list. Congress acceded to this request, but still gave way to the same malignant influence that had dictated the former arrangement, so far as to confer the appointment of brigadier-general, in the service of the United States, upon Colonels Howe and Lewis, offering Henry a commission of colonel. This he without hesitation declined, and at the same time resigned that which he held from the authorities of his own state.

The resignation of Henry created great discontent in the army, by whom he was regarded with enthusiastic admiration and attachment, as the most eminent patriot in the state. The troops immediately put on mourning, and proceeded in military array to his lodgings, where the officers presented to him the following address ;

*“ To Patrick Henry, Jun., Esq. Deeply impressed with a grateful sense of the obligations we lie under to you, for the polite, humane, and tender treatment, manifested to us throughout the whole of your conduct, while we had the honor of being under your command, permit us to offer you our sincere thanks, as the only tribute we have in our power to pay to your real merits.*



Notwithstanding your withdrawing yourself from the service fills us with the most poignant sorrow, as it at once deprives us of our father and general, yet, as gentlemen, we are compelled to applaud your spirited resentment to the most glaring indignity. May your merit shine as conspicuous to the world in general, as it hath done to us, and may Heaven shower its choicest blessings upon you."

To this address Henry returned the following answer ;

"Gentlemen ; I am exceedingly obliged to you for your approbation of my conduct. Your address does me the highest honor. This kind testimony of your regard for me would have been an ample reward for services much greater than those, which I have had the power to perform. I return you, and each of you, gentlemen, my best acknowledgments for the spirit, alacrity, and zeal, you have constantly shown in your several stations. I am unhappy to part with you. I leave the service, but I leave my heart with you. May God bless you, and give you success and safety, and make you the glorious instruments of saving our country."

After receiving this address from Henry, the officers invited him to dine with them at the Raleigh tavern, and were preparing, after dinner, to escort him out of town. In the mean time,

the soldiers had assembled in a rather disorderly manner, and demanded their discharge, declaring that they would not consent to serve under any other commander than Henry. Perceiving that this movement, if not checked, might lead to serious consequences, Henry concluded to pass another night in town, during which he visited the troops at their barracks, and urged them to continue in the service, which, as he said, he had quitted for reasons interesting to himself alone. His exertions, backed by those of other favorite officers, proved successful, and the soldiers acquiesced without further difficulty in the new arrangement.

A feeling, similar to that which prevailed among the troops at Williamsburg, manifested itself, with equal distinctness, in other forms, and particularly in an address which was signed by more than ninety officers stationed at several different points, and, in part, under Colonel Woodford's immediate command.

In consequence of these demonstrations of opinion and feeling, in regard to the resignation of Henry, the Committee of Safety felt themselves obliged to publish a defence of their conduct, which appeared in a leading newspaper, with the signature of *A Friend of Truth*. The committee represent themselves as having, in the first instance, requested that all the state troops

should be taken into the continental service, and that, when the Convention remonstrated against the discrimination made by Congress, the committee, in transmitting this remonstrance, had particularly urged a compliance with it, "as a point of great consequence to our harmony, in which may be involved the good of the common cause." The defence, being thus confined to a justification of the formal proceedings of the committee, has, of course, no tendency to repel the real charge, which is founded in the supposition of secret suggestions of an adverse character.

Such was the termination of the military career of Patrick Henry. There can, of course, be but one opinion, among men of correct feeling, in regard to the malignant intrigue by which it was brought about; but it may well be doubted whether the result was in any way really injurious, either to Henry or the country. His peculiar gift was eloquence, for which the military service would have afforded no field whatever; and, supposing even that he had exhibited, on trial, an aptitude for warlike affairs not inferior to his natural talent for public speaking, it may be questioned whether the army, at least in any other part than that of commander-in-chief, afforded as good a field for honorable and useful activity as the senate and the bar.

As the oracle of his native state, at the time beyond comparison the most prominent in the country, he occupied as important a place as could well have been secured by any other career of service. Had his age permitted him to take part in the debates of Congress, or to fill executive offices under the new constitution, he might have been rather more extensively known to his contemporaries at home and abroad ; but, on the other hand, by having lived at a somewhat earlier period, and connected his name, as he did, with the first movements of the revolution, he obtained a very peculiar glory, with which hardly any other, growing out of the events of that time, can come into competition. The opposition which checked his military career, however unamiable and discreditable to those who were concerned in it, was perhaps not unnatural, considering the uncere-mónious manner in which he had resisted the advice and authority of the older political leaders. It was fortunate for him that the disgust and jealousy, which he thus provoked, produced no worse result than his forced retreat from the army, and a passing mortification, for which he was destined to receive very early and ample satisfaction from his grateful fellow-citizens.

The state of the relations between the colonies and the mother country virtually annulled the established forms of government, and it was



necessary for the colonies to reorganize their political institutions on a new foundation. For this purpose, each colony was regarded as a distinct community, possessing, by the laws of nature, an inherent right, under existing circumstances, to adopt any form of government which it might prefer. The right was exercised through the agency of popular conventions; and a meeting of this kind was held at Williamsburg, in Virginia, on the 6th of May, 1776. Henry was elected a member of this body for the county of Hanover. On the 15th of May, Mr. Cary reported, from a committee of the whole House, with a suitable preamble, two important resolutions, one of which instructed the delegates to the General Congress to propose to that body a declaration of independence and a confederation of the colonies, while the other provided for raising a committee to prepare a declaration of rights, and a plan of government for the new commonwealth of Virginia.

In pursuance of the second resolution, a committee was appointed, consisting of thirty-four of the most prominent patriots, including Henry, and, among the others, Mr. Madison. On the 12th of June, the committee reported a declaration of rights, and, on the 29th, a plan of government, both which were unanimously adopted by the Convention. The declaration was prepared by



Jefferson, the constitution chiefly by George Mason, a neighbor and intimate friend of Washington. Jefferson had transmitted from Philadelphia, where he was then in attendance as a member in Congress, to his friend, Mr. Wythe, a plan of government, accompanied by a declaration of rights, to be submitted to the Convention. Before it was received, the plan of the committee had already been adopted; but it was subsequently modified, in some parts, in accordance with Mr. Jefferson's views, and the declaration which he had sent was prefixed to it as a preamble. This document coincides, in its general outline, and in many particular passages, with the Declaration of Independence, which was issued, on the 4th of July following, by the General Congress; and, as Mr. Jefferson's name was not at the time publicly connected with the Virginia Declaration, he has sometimes, on the strength of this coincidence, been accused of plagiarism in preparing that of the 4th of July. It is sufficient to say, in answer to this imputation, that the plan of government which he transmitted to Mr. Wythe, including the Declaration as it now stands in the statute-book, are still preserved, in Mr. Jefferson's hand-writing, in the archives of Virginia.

By the new constitution, the executive power was committed to a chief magistrate, with the

title of governor, to be annually elected by the legislature, and to be eligible for three successive terms. For the purpose of putting the measure at once in operation, the Convention took upon themselves the responsibility of designating the chief magistrate, and thus obtained an opportunity of compensating Henry, by a signal mark of public favor, for the *glaring indignity* which, in the language of the address from the troops, had been offered him by the Committee of Safety. On proceeding to a choice, the votes stood as follows; Patrick Henry, sixty; Thomas Nelson, forty-five; John Page, one. Nelson had been president of the council, under the preceding government, and was probably put forward by the friends of the committee, as an opponent to Henry. He was afterwards elected a member of the new council, but declined the appointment on the score of age and infirmity.

In answer to the notice of his election, communicated to him by a committee of the Convention, the new Governor returned the following address;

*"To the Honorable the President and House of Convention.* Gentlemen; The vote of this day, appointing me Governor of the commonwealth, has been notified to me, in the most polite and obliging manner, by George Mason,

Henry Lee, Dudley Digges, John Blair, and Bartholomew Dandridge, Esquires.

“A sense of the high and unmerited honor conferred upon me by the Convention fills my heart with gratitude, which I trust my whole life will manifest. I take this earliest opportunity to express my thanks, which I wish to convey to you, gentlemen, in the strongest terms of acknowledgment.

“When I reflect that the tyranny of the British King and Parliament hath kindled a formidable war, now raging throughout this wide-extended continent, and in the operations of which this commonwealth must bear so great a part; and that, from the events of this war, the lasting happiness or misery of a great proportion of the human species will finally result; that, in order to preserve this commonwealth from anarchy, and its attendant ruin, and to give vigor to our councils, and effect to all our measures, government hath been necessarily assumed, and new-modelled; that it is exposed to numberless hazards, and perils, in its infantine state; that it can never attain to maturity, or ripen into firmness, unless it is guided by an affectionate assiduity, and managed by great abilities; I lament my want of talents; I feel my mind filled with anxiety and uneasiness, to find myself so unequal to the duties of that important station, to which I am

called, by the favor of my fellow-citizens, at this truly critical conjuncture. The errors of my conduct shall be atoned for, so far as I am able, by unwearied endeavors to secure the freedom and happiness of our common country.

“I shall enter upon the duties of my office, whenever you, Gentlemen, shall be pleased to direct; relying upon the known wisdom and virtue of your honorable House to supply my defects, and to give permanency and success to that system of government which you have founded, and which is so wisely calculated to secure equal liberty, and advance human happiness.

“I have the honor to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and very humble servant,

“P. HENRY, Jun.”

The election of Henry as Governor was received with great favor by the public, and especially by the troops. The two regiments, which he had recently commanded, presented to him the following address;

“May it please your Excellency; Permit us, with the sincerest sentiments of respect and joy, to congratulate your Excellency upon your unsolicited promotion to the highest honors a grateful people can bestow. Uninfluenced by private ambition, regardless of sordid interest, you have uniformly pursued the general good of your coun-

try ; and have taught the world, that an ingenious love of the rights of mankind, an inflexible resolution, and a steady perseverance in the practice of every public and private virtue, lead directly to preferment, and give the best title to the honors of our uncorrupted and vigorous state.

“Once happy under your military command, we hope for more extensive blessings from your civil administration.

“Intrusted as your Excellency is, in some measure, with the support of a young empire, our hearts are willing, and our arms ready, to maintain your authority as chief magistrate ; happy that we have lived to see the day, when freedom and equal rights, established by the voice of the people, shall prevail through the land.

“We are, may it please your Excellency, your Excellency’s most devoted and most obedient servants.”

To this address Henry returned the following answer ;

“Gentlemen of the First and Second Virginia Regiments ; Your address does me the highest honor. Be pleased to accept my most cordial thanks for your favorable and kind sentiments of my principles and conduct.

“The high appointment to which my fellow-citizens have called me was, indeed, *unsolicited*,



*unmerited.* I am, therefore, under increased obligations to promote the safety, dignity, and happiness of the commonwealth.

“While the civil powers are employed in establishing a system of government, liberal, equitable, in every part of which the genius of equal liberty breathes her blessed influence, to you is assigned the glorious task of saving, by your valor, all that is dear to mankind. Go on, Gentlemen, to finish the great work you have so nobly and successfully begun. Convince the tyrants again, that they shall bleed, that America will bleed to her last drop, ere their wicked schemes find success.

“The remembrance of my former connection with you shall be ever dear to me. I honor your profession, I revere that patriot virtue, which, in your conduct, hath produced cheerful obedience, exemplary courage, and contempt of hardship and danger. Be assured, Gentlemen, I shall feel the highest pleasure in embracing every opportunity to contribute to your happiness and welfare; and I trust the day will come, when I shall make one of those that will hail you among the triumphant deliverers of America.

“I have the honor to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and very humble servant,

“P. HENRY, Jun.”

The Governor's palace at Williamsburg, which

had been previously converted into a hospital, was now restored to its original use; and, on the 5th of July, the new Governor and Council took the oaths of office, and entered on the discharge of their duties.

Thus had Henry, in the short space of thirteen years, which had elapsed since he argued the Parsons' Cause, on the 1st of December, 1763, ascended from the position of an obscure advocate and a mere private citizen, through the responsible stations of member of the Assembly, member of Congress, and commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces, to the chief magistracy of the commonwealth. He had risen solely by the effect of talent and character, without any aid from powerful connections, without the use of any courtly arts, without even the indefatigable and persevering industry, which sometimes supplies the absence of almost every other advantage. Jealousy and envy had tried their worst upon him, not without some transient success, but had signally failed in the end, in all their efforts to obstruct his progress and injure his position. The bar-keeper of the little inn at Hanover had become the occupant of the Governor's palace at Williamsburg. The "obscure advocate" of the Parsons' Cause was now the greatest orator in the country, and one of the leading statesmen and magistrates in a new political system, created in

no small degree by his own exertions. The indolent youth, who, at five and twenty, seemed to have lost every chance for success and distinction, had assumed, before forty, an eminent position among those whom Bacon describes as the first class of great men, *the founders of nations*. The most difficult and important objects of his earthly mission were accomplished. We are now to follow him through the highly honorable but comparatively easy routine of political and professional duty, where we shall find him exhibiting the same talents and virtues which had carried him, with so much brilliancy and success, through the stormy struggles of the revolution.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Administration as Governor. — Return to private Life. — Reëlected Governor. — Resigns. — Elected to the Assembly.*

THE office of Governor of a state, however honorable as a mark of public esteem, is one, in general, of mere routine, and affords but little opportunity for the display of superior talents; especially in the line in which Henry was par-

ticularly distinguished, that of forensic and parliamentary eloquence. His term of service in this capacity is accordingly the portion of his life, which furnishes the most scanty supply of materials for the biographer. Soon after his entrance into office, Lord Dunmore evacuated the territory of the state. The military operations, which had been going on during the preceding year, were, in consequence, brought to a close, and were not renewed, to any considerable extent, while Henry was Governor. He had, therefore, no occasion for the exercise of the powers of commander-in-chief, which, as an appendage to the chief magistracy, had now been restored to him by the suffrages of the legislature. In his civil capacity his administration is represented as having been efficient and successful, but undistinguished by any event of extraordinary importance.

At the first session of the legislature after his election, an incident occurred of a singular, rather than very important, character, which seems to require some notice in an account of his life, although, from the means of information now extant and accessible, it is difficult to form a very satisfactory idea of it.

The Assembly met in the autumn of the year 1776, perhaps the most gloomy period of the war. The occupation of New York by the

British troops, and the losses sustained by Washington, in two or three actions in the neighborhood of that city, had, in a great measure, obliterated the recollection of the successes of the preceding year. The extreme difficulty of providing the resources necessary for keeping up even the appearance of opposition to the numerous well-disciplined and well-appointed armies of England began to be apparent. There was no assurance yet of any aid from abroad. Under these disastrous circumstances, a vague imagination seems to have crossed the minds of a portion of the members of the Virginia legislature, that something might be gained by a recourse to the expedient so often adopted by the Romans in cases of great emergency, the concentration of the whole civil and military power of the republic in the hands of a single person, with the title of dictator.

The inutility, in reference to the general situation of the country, of constituting a state dictator, who would have had, as such, no right to exercise his unbounded powers out of the narrow limits of his own dominion, or for any other than state objects, was sufficiently obvious, one would have thought, to satisfy the least judicious person that such a project, if not dangerous, was wholly destitute of plausibility. It is certain, however, that the plan was contemplated, for it became



the subject of warm and acrimonious discussion among the members of the Assembly. It is also known that Henry was the person, whom the projectors of this scheme intended to create dictator. There is no proof that he had himself any share in the plan, which was even distinctly disavowed at the time, and ever since, by himself and his friends. It appears, however, that he did not escape suspicion. While the project was in agitation, Colonel Archibald Cary, then speaker of the Assembly, a patriot of great consideration, but of a somewhat violent temper, met, in the lobby of the house, Colonel Syme, the brother-in-law of Henry, and addressed him as follows; "I am told, that your brother wishes to be dictator; tell him, from me, that the day of his appointment shall be the day of his death; for he shall feel my dagger in his heart before the sunset of that day." Colonel Syme replied, in great agitation, that, if such a project existed, his brother would certainly never lend himself to it, or to any other plan which would endanger the liberty of the country.

Whatever apprehensions may have been entertained at the time by individuals, it is certain that no unfavorable impression was produced upon the general feeling of the Assembly, for, at the next annual election, on the 30th of May, 1777, Henry was unanimously reëlected Governor, the members

of the legislature being mostly the same as those of the preceding year, and Colonel Cary being again the presiding officer of the House. It does not appear from the account, that the project was at this time formally proposed to the Assembly ; but four years afterwards, at another period of general alarm, when the territory of Virginia had become again the theatre of actual hostilities, and when the session of the legislature had been interrupted by an inroad of British troops, the project was again started, and not only made the subject of consideration in private, but actually proposed in the Assembly, and lost by only a very few votes.

Mr. Jefferson, who was then Governor of the state, and had, of course, the strongest motives for informing himself, as far as possible, of the real character of this singular scheme, denounces it, in strong terms, in his Notes on Virginia, but acquits the persons implicated in it, whom he does not name, of anything worse than an error of judgment. Henry was now, as before, the intended dictator ; and, as the plan must have been within his knowledge, it seems hardly possible that it could have been entertained for years in succession, and finally proposed in the legislature, without his concurrence. Supposing that he suggested or favored it, there is, of course, no reason to suspect that he had any other ob-

ject in view than the ostensible one of the public good.

His favorite reading was the history of Rome ; and the example of that illustrious commonwealth, as well as his own experience, had shown him the entire incapacity of deliberative assemblies for the conduct of military affairs. The real objection to the plan of a state dictator was not, in fact, the danger resulting from the existence of such an office to the public liberty, but its utter inefficiency for the defence of the Union. The expediency of something of the kind, for state purposes, was felt in Virginia, in 1781 ; and, although the plan of creating a dictator was rejected, resolutions were passed, conferring on the Governor and Council extraordinary powers, amounting to an unlimited control over the purse and sword of the state, and requesting Congress to intrust authority of a similar description to the commander-in-chief of the forces of the Union, which was, in fact, done. The concern, if any, which Henry may have had in the project of constituting a dictator need not, therefore, diminish our confidence in his patriotism, although it might, perhaps, impair, in some degree, our respect for his judgment. Even in this particular, as the tendency of his mind was always for the boldest and most energetic course of action, the plan would not

have been very much at variance with the predominant traits of his character.

During the second year of Henry's administration as Governor occurred the intrigue against the influence of Washington, which has sometimes been called the *Conway Cabal*. The origin, character, extent, and precise objects, of this conspiracy are not very exactly known. It appears to have included a good many members of Congress, and some distinguished officers of the army. The success of General Gates, in the capture of the British troops under Burgoyne, seems to have given to Gates himself, and perhaps to others, the impression that he was superior, in efficiency as a commander, to Washington. Those who held this opinion may have thought it politic and patriotic to endeavor to substitute Gates for Washington in the chief command. Other influences, of a less honorable kind, no doubt, had their effect in determining the movement. The existence of the intrigue was made known to Washington through the indiscretion of General Conway, and the odium of the affair has finally rested upon him more directly than upon any other person, though it is difficult to view him in any other light than as an instrument of Gates. The intention seems to have been to act through the medium of

Congress, where the cabal had supporters; to disgust Washington by repeated slights, until he should be induced to resign, and then to appoint Gates in his place.

The appointment of Conway to the place of Inspector-General of the army, against the express advice of Washington, and after his hostility to the commander-in-chief was known, was the strongest demonstration made by the conspirators towards carrying their views into effect. The discovery of the plot by Washington, and his cool and discreet, but at the same time firm, conduct on the occasion, apparently disconcerted the leaders, and checked their operations for the time; while the total failure of Gates, in his southern campaign, removed every honest and plausible pretext for a change. Conway's characteristic indiscretion afterwards involved him in a controversy with Congress, which led to his compulsory resignation, and in a duel which nearly cost him his life. While suffering from the effect of his wounds, and in expectation of immediate dissolution, he wrote a penitential letter to Washington, in which he avows, with expressions of deep regret, his share in the plot, and declares Washington to be, in his eyes, the "great and good man." This voluntary confession of the principal agent in the plot, while it does but little to atone for his guilt, is



valuable as a complete bar to the suspicion, which might otherwise have arisen in some minds, that there was a real foundation for imputations of some sort upon the character or capacity of Washington. An attempt was made to implicate Henry in this cabal. An anonymous letter was sent to him, on this subject, dated at Yorktown, January 12th, 1778.

A passage in that letter, which is given as an extract from a letter of General Conway to a friend, coincides exactly in substance, and very nearly in the language, with one in a letter from Conway to Gates, which accidentally became known to Washington, and first revealed to him the existence of the plot. It is worthy of remark, that the substantial genuineness of the latter passage is here avowed by one of the conspirators, although the defence afterwards set up by Gates, when the affair was brought home to him by Washington, was, that the supposed extract was not in the letter, and was a "wicked forgery." The true state of the case might easily have been shown by producing the letter, which the conspirators never ventured to do. The reality of the passage in question is admitted by the strongest implication, in the first letters, written by Conway and Gates to Washington on the subject, as was remarked by Washington at the time, in his pointed and manly reply to

the latter. It is here directly avowed by one of the conspirators. The pretence of forgery was evidently an after-thought. This overture was treated by Henry in the way which might have been expected from his known character. He transmitted the communication to Washington, enclosed in the following letter ;

“ *Williamsburg, February 20th, 1778.* • Dear Sir ; You will, no doubt, be surprised at seeing the enclosed letter, in which the encomiums bestowed on me are as undeserved, as the censures aimed at you are unjust. I am sorry there should be one man who counts himself my friend, who is not yours.

“ Perhaps I give you needless trouble in handing you this paper. The writer of it may be too insignificant to deserve any notice. If I knew this to be the case, I should not have intruded on your time, which is so precious. But there may possibly be some scheme or party forming to your prejudice. The enclosed leads to such a suspicion. Believe me, Sir, I have too high a sense of the obligations America has to you, to abet or countenance so unworthy a proceeding. The most exalted merit hath ever been found to attract envy. But I please myself with the hope, that the same fortitude and greatness of mind, which have hitherto braved all the difficulties and dangers inseparable from your sta-

tion, will rise superior to every attempt of the envious partisan.

“I really cannot tell who is the writer of this letter, which not a little perplexes me. The hand-writing is altogether strange to me.

“To give you the trouble of this gives me pain. It would suit my inclination better to give you some assistance in the great business of the war. But I will not conceal anything from you by which you may be affected; for I really think your personal welfare and the happiness of America are intimately connected. I beg you will be assured of that high regard and esteem, with which I ever am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and very humble servant.”

On the 5th of March, Henry wrote a second letter to Washington on the same subject, as follows;

“Dear Sir; By an express which Colonel Finnie sent to camp, I enclosed to you an anonymous letter, which I hope got safe to hand. I am anxious to hear something that will serve to explain the strange affair, which I am now informed is taken up respecting you. Mr. Custis has just paid us a visit, and by him I learn sundry particulars concerning General Mifflin, that much surprised me. It is very hard to trace the schemes and windings of the enemies to America. I really thought that man its friend; however, I am too far from him to judge of his present temper.

“While you face the armed enemies of our liberty in the field, and, by the favor of God, have been kept unhurt, I trust your country will never harbor in her bosom the miscreant who would ruin her best supporter. I wish not to flatter; but when arts, unworthy honest men, are used to defame and traduce you, I think it not amiss, but a duty, to assure you of that estimation in which the public hold you. Not that I think any testimony I can bear is necessary for your support, or private satisfaction; for a bare recollection of what is past must give you sufficient pleasure in every circumstance of life. But I cannot help assuring you, on this occasion, of the high sense of gratitude which all ranks of men in this your native country bear to you. It will give me sincere pleasure to manifest my regards, and render my best services to you or yours. - I do not like to make a parade of these things, and I know you are not fond of it; however, I hope the occasion will plead my excuse.

“Wishing you all possible felicity, I am, my dear Sir, your ever affectionate friend, and very humble servant.” \*

In the spring of 1778, Henry was unanimously

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\* Washington's answers, and all the letters on this subject, may be found in WASHINGTON'S WRITINGS, Vol. V. pp. 483 - 518.

reëlected Governor. At the close of the year, although he had served three terms, and was consequently no longer eligible by the constitution, it seems to have been the wish and intention of some of the members of the legislature to reëlect him once more, on the ground, that, as he was chosen the first time by the Convention, and not by the legislature, the period during which he was constitutionally eligible did not commence till the second year of his administration. Henry, however, did not think proper to acquiesce in this construction of the constitution, and declined a reëlection in the following letter to the speaker of the Assembly ;

“ *May 28th, 1779.* Sir ; The term for which I had the honor to be elected Governor by the late Assembly being just about to expire, and the constitution, as I think, making me ineligible to that office, I take the liberty to communicate to the Assembly, through you, Sir, my intention to retire in four or five days.

“ I have thought it necessary to give this notification of my design, in order that the Assembly may have the earliest opportunity of deliberating upon the choice of a successor to me in office.

“ With great regard, I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient servant.”

In the autumn of 1784, six years after the close of his former term of service, Henry, being



now eligible by the constitution, was again elected Governor, and, at the termination of his official year, was reëlected to the same office. It was the wish and intention of the legislature, that he should have completed another three years' term; but, at the end of the second year, he declined a reëlection.

The motive which induced him to decline was the embarrassed state of his private affairs. Although his manner of living was entirely free from ostentation, he had found the salary allowed him as Governor insufficient to cover his expenses, and had been compelled to contract debts which he had no means of paying, but by the sale of a part of his estate, or by resuming the practice of his profession. He judiciously chose the latter course. During his employment in the public service, some changes had taken place in his private relations. His wife, after lingering through several years of ill-health and suffering, had died. Soon after this event, he had sold the estate on which he had been residing in Hanover county, and had purchased a tract of eight or ten thousand acres of land in the new county of Henry, which had been erected during his administration, and called by his name.

In the year 1777, he espoused, in second nuptials, a daughter of Mr. A. W. Dandridge, and fixed his residence at his newly-acquired estate,

called Leatherwood. On resuming his attendance in the courts, he confined himself chiefly to the duties of counsellor and advocate, leaving it to his junior associates to attend to technical details. He was employed in all the cases of importance, as well in other parts of the state, as in his own immediate neighborhood. After the close of his first term of service as Governor, he was elected a member of the Assembly, and continued till the close of his active life to take a prominent part in the proceedings of that body. In this field of action he distinguished himself by liberality of feeling and soundness of judgment, not less than by the superiority of his powers in debate.

Immediately after the close of the revolution, he proposed in the Assembly, that the persons who had left the state, in consequence of their adherence to the policy of the mother country, should be permitted to return. This measure was violently resisted, but was finally adopted, chiefly under the impression produced by his overwhelming eloquence. A report of his speech on this occasion has been preserved, and is remarkable for its correct views of the economical situation of the country, and its sagacious foresight of the future course of events, as well as for its noble sentiments and richness of language. Judge Tyler, then speaker of the Assembly,

opposed the measure with extreme violence in the committee of the whole, and, appealing personally to Henry, as one of its principal supporters, expressed his wonder, that he, of all men, after standing forward as the great champion of independence, should now appear as the advocate of the detested refugees. Henry replied as follows.

“The personal feelings of a politician ought not to be permitted to enter these walls. The question is a national one, and, in deciding it, if we act wisely, nothing will be regarded but the interest of the nation. On the altar of my country’s good I am willing to sacrifice all personal resentments, all private wrongs; and I flatter myself, that I am not the only man in the House who is capable of making such a sacrifice. We have, Sir, an extensive country, *without population*; what can be a more obvious policy than that this country ought to be peopled? *People*, Sir, form the strength, and constitute the wealth, of a nation. I want to see our vast forests filled up by some process a little more speedy than the ordinary course of nature. I wish to see these states rapidly ascending to that rank which their natural advantages authorize them to hold among the nations of the earth.

“Cast your eyes, Sir, over this extensive country; observe the salubrity of your climate; the variety and fertility of your soil; and see

that soil intersected in every-quarter by bold, navigable streams, flowing to the east and to the west, as if the finger of Heaven were marking out the course of your settlements, inviting you to enterprise, and pointing the way to wealth. Sir, you are destined, at some time or other, to become a great agricultural and commercial people ; the only question is, whether you choose to reach this point by slow gradations, and at some distant period ; lingering on through a long and sickly minority ; subjected, meanwhile, to the machinations, insults, and oppressions, of enemies, foreign and domestic, without sufficient strength to resist and chastise them ; or whether you choose rather to rush at once, as it were, to the full enjoyment of those high destinies, and be able to cope, single-handed, with the proudest oppressor of the old world. If you prefer the latter course, as I trust you do, encourage emigration ; encourage the husbandmen, the mechanics, the merchants, of the old world, to come and settle in this land of promise ; make it the home of the skilful, the industrious, the fortunate, and happy, as well as the asylum of the distressed ; fill up the measure of your population as speedily as you can, by the means which Heaven hath placed in your power ; and I venture to prophesy there are those now living, who will see this favored land amongst the most powerful on earth ; able,

Sir, to take care of herself, without resorting to that policy which is always so dangerous, though sometimes unavoidable, of calling in foreign aid. Yes, Sir; they will see her great in arts and in arms; her golden harvests waving over fields of immeasurable extent; her commerce penetrating the most distant seas, and her cannon silencing the vain boasts of those who now proudly affect to rule the waves.

“But, Sir, you must have *men*; you cannot get along without them; those heavy forests of valuable timber, under which your lands are groaning, must be cleared away; those vast riches which cover the face of your soil, as well as those which lie hid in its bosom, are to be developed and gathered only by the skill and enterprise of men; your timber, Sir, must be worked up into ships, to transport the productions of the soil from which it has been cleared; then you must have commercial men and commercial capital to take off your productions, and find the best markets for them abroad. Your great want, Sir, is the want of *men*, and these you must have, and will have speedily, if you are wise.

“Do you ask how you are to get them? Open your doors, Sir, and they will come in; the population of the old world is full to overflowing; that population is ground, too, by the oppressions of the governments under which they live. Sir,



they are already standing on tiptoe upon their native shores, and looking to your coasts with a wishful and longing eye; they see here a land blessed with natural and political advantages which are not equalled by those of any other country upon earth; a land on which a gracious Providence hath emptied the horn of abundance; a land over which Peace hath now stretched forth her white wings, and where content and plenty lie down at every door! Sir, they see something still more attractive than all this; they see a land in which Liberty hath taken up her abode; that Liberty, whom they had considered as a fabled goddess, existing only in the fancies of poets; they see her here a real divinity, her altars rising on every hand throughout these happy states, her glories chanted by three millions of tongues, and the whole region smiling under her blessed influence. Sir, let but this our celestial goddess, Liberty, stretch forth her fair hand toward the people of the old world, tell them to come, and bid them welcome, and you will see them pouring in from the north, from the south, from the east, and from the west; your wildernesses will be cleared and settled, your deserts will smile, your ranks will be filled, and you will soon be in a condition to defy the powers of any adversary.

“But gentlemen object to any accession from Great Britain, and particularly to the return of

the British refugees. Sir, I feel no objection to the return of those deluded people; they have, to be sure, mistaken their own interests most wofully, and most wofully have they suffered the punishment due to their offences. But the relations which we bear to them and to their native country are now changed; their king hath acknowledged our independence; the quarrel is over; peace hath returned, and found us a free people. Let us have the magnanimity, Sir, to lay aside our antipathies and prejudices, and consider the subject in a political light. Those are an enterprising, moneyed people; they will be serviceable in taking off the surplus produce of our lands, and supplying us with necessaries during the infant state of our manufactures. Even if they be inimical to us in point of feeling and principle, I can see no objection, in a political view, to making them tributary to our advantage. And as I have no prejudices to prevent my making this use of them, so, Sir, I have no fear of any mischief that they can do us. Afraid of *them*! What, Sir, shall *we*, who have laid the proud British *lion* at our feet, now be afraid of his *whelps*?"

The concluding phrase is not, perhaps, entitled, as a specimen of rhetoric, to all the praise that has been bestowed upon it; but it is impossible to speak too favorably of the substance of

the speech. The liberality of our institutions, and especially the generous and truly wise policy which throws open our vacant territory, at a merely nominal price, to all who choose to occupy it, are working out the results predicted by Henry with a rapidity, which even his ardent imagination could hardly have anticipated.

In the same liberal spirit, he supported and carried, against a vigorous opposition, a proposal for removing the restraints on British commerce. It was apprehended by some, that a free admission of British ships would exclude the trade of all other nations, and deprive us of the advantage of competition in reducing the price of our supplies from abroad. Henry repelled this objection with splendid eloquence ; enlarged on the distress which the people had suffered by the interruption of foreign commerce ; and concluded with proclaiming, in emphatic language, the doctrine of the liberty of trade, less familiar to the public ear at that time than it is now. — “ Why should we fetter commerce ? ” was his concluding remark ; “ a man in chains droops and bows to the earth ; his spirits are broken ; but let him twist the fetters from his legs, and he will stand upright. Fetter not Commerce, Sir ; let her be as free as air. She will range the whole creation, and return on the wings of the four winds of heaven to bless the land with plenty.”

During the session of 1784, Henry proposed in the Assembly a measure marked by the same originality of thought, and humanity of feeling, which dictated the others, but somewhat questionable, perhaps, on the score of practicability and expediency. The inconvenience which had been suffered, during the last and preceding wars, from the aggressions of the neighboring Indians, appeared to render it a matter of high importance to inspire them in some way with more amicable sentiments. Formal treaties of peace and alliance were known to be wholly ineffectual. Henry proposed to effect the object by a law to encourage intermarriage between the two races, and brought in a bill holding out strong inducements to the formation of connections of this kind, such as a pecuniary bounty, to be repeated at the birth of every child, exemption from taxes, and the free use of an institution for education, to be established for the purpose at the expense of the state.

The bill had its first and second reading, and was engrossed for its final passage, apparently under the influence of Henry's support; for no sooner was he withdrawn from the House, by his election as Governor for a second term, which took place at this time, than the bill, on coming up for a third reading, was rejected. Had the relative numbers and positions of the two races been

destined to remain as they were at this time, such a measure might have had a good effect, although the popular feeling, which has always been opposed to a mixture of races, would have probably rendered it ineffectual. But the overwhelming and constantly increasing preponderance of the whites, in power and numbers, pretty soon settled the question in a different way, by compelling the red men to retire from the frontiers of Virginia, and seek for new hunting grounds in the far west.

Among the measures supported, though not proposed, by Henry, was a resolution for the incorporation of all Christian societies which might make application to that effect, and another imposing a general assessment for the support of public worship, but leaving it to the discretion of the individual to appropriate the tax levied upon him to any church which he might prefer. The bills founded upon these resolutions were reported after Henry had ceased to be a member of the House; but the principles imbodyed in them had received his warm support in the introductory stage. The bill founded on the first of the two resolutions became a law; the other was rejected by a small majority, on the third reading.

On the 4th of December, 1786, soon after his final retirement from the chief magistracy of his



state, Henry was elected by the legislature one of the delegates to the Convention for revising the Articles of Confederation among the states. His name stood upon the list, as recorded in the journal, next after that of Washington. The same imperious consideration, which had compelled him to decline reëlection as Governor, the urgent necessity of attending to his private affairs, also imposed it upon him as a duty to refrain from the acceptance of this high and honorable commission, the full importance of which was not, however, so distinctly perceived at the time as it is now. After the national Convention, which met the following year at Philadelphia, had terminated their labors, and submitted the result to the people, a state Convention was called in Virginia, to take the proposed constitution into consideration. Henry was elected by the county of Prince Edward, where he then resided, a member of this body, which met at Richmond on the 2d of June, 1788.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Virginia Convention for considering the Plan of the Federal Constitution.—Henry opposes its Adoption.*

IN following the progress of Henry through his long political career up to the point which we have now reached, we have more than once seen him acting upon his own views, in direct opposition to those of the most distinguished and patriotic of his fellow-laborers, in the common cause of independence and liberty. On all these occasions he had the satisfaction of finding his course sanctioned, after a short interval, by the almost unanimous approbation of his fellow-citizens; and the public opinion of the country seems to have settled down in the conviction that the bold, vigorous, and, as it may have appeared to some at the time, violent policy, which he recommended and acted on, was the one best fitted to effect the common purpose.

In regard to the course which he pursued in the Convention for considering the plan of the federal constitution, he did not enjoy the same good fortune. He appeared in that Assembly as a determined opponent of the adoption of the plan, and maintained his views throughout the

whole discussion with his characteristic ardor, perseverance, and power of logic and eloquence. Taking the whole country through, he was by far the most distinguished and conspicuous person, who opposed the new system. The great prosperity which the country has enjoyed for half a century in succession under this system, and which is justly attributed in no small degree to its beneficial influence, has long since stamped the constitution with the seal of general favor. It is now a matter of surprise and regret, to find that any one, and especially one so renowned as Henry for talent, patriotism, and eloquence, should have failed to perceive what has since become so apparent to all, and should have labored with so much earnestness to prevent the adoption of a system that has proved, in practice, the salvation of the country. We are half tempted to doubt, whether the opponents of the constitution acted with correct intentions and purely patriotic feelings, in resisting a measure which appears to us, at the present day, so clearly and manifestly right, and to attribute their course to perversity and selfishness, rather than to the lofty and patriotic motives upon which it was at the time justified by themselves.

We must recollect, however, in forming an opinion upon their conduct, that the constitution presented itself to their minds under a very

different aspect from that in which it now appears to us. It came before the State Conventions, no doubt, under circumstances, in some respects, of the most auspicious character. It was offered as the result of the long and anxious deliberations of a most respectable assembly; it bore the signature of Washington. But there were other considerations connected with it of a different kind. It was known that the Convention had been greatly divided in opinion, and that the most important provisions in the constitution had been sanctioned by the smallest possible majorities, after the most intense and bitter opposition. The plan was untried, and patriotism imperiously required that an untried system, involving a complete revolution in the government, should be examined with extreme jealousy. This appeared the more necessary, as the Convention, in framing a new government, instead of merely amending the existing one, had in some degree exceeded its formal powers.

The system presented, in its most conspicuous, if not most important, features, particularly that of a single executive magistrate, forms repugnant to the cherished and habitual feelings of the people. These feelings were, of course, not diminished, in the present instance, by the knowledge, that the prominent friends of the constitution had urged, with great earnestness, in the Convention, the

adoption of the provisions in a much more obnoxious shape. If the tendency of the system, as it stood, were considered doubtful, the fact that its ablest supporters in the Convention declared the British constitution, especially in the executive branch, to be the model of a good government, might well justify the suspicion that the new project had, as Henry remarked, an "awful squinting towards monarchy." It may even be doubted, whether the views of the opponents of the plan were not, on some points, more correct than those of its supporters, and whether the immense amount of good, which has resulted from the adoption of the constitution, may not have been the effect of its great leading principles, operating in spite, rather than by the aid, of some provisions, which were considered at the time, both by friends and opponents, as more important than they really were, and which, so far as they have operated, have been of injurious rather than beneficial tendency. On the whole, it not only seems unnecessary to attribute the action of the opponents of the constitution to perversity or selfish views, but it may even be doubted whether the course pursued by them was not the one, which would most naturally recommend itself to an ardent and uncompromising friend of popular principles of government.

The point upon which the debates in the Gen-



eral Convention chiefly turned was the question, whether the states should possess an equal vote in Congress, as had been the case under the old confederacy, or a number of votes proportional in each case to their comparative population. The Virginia plan, as it was called, which had been proposed by Governor Randolph, was supported with great power by Mr. Madison, who recommended the latter course. The former was the leading feature in the New Jersey plan, proposed by Mr. Paterson. After protracted and warm debates, the point was finally compromised by granting to the states an equal vote in the Senate, and a proportional one in the House of Representatives. This arrangement was not satisfactory, at the time, to the ardent supporters of either principle.

Some of the most prominent champions of the New Jersey scheme actually quitted the Convention and returned home, after it was agreed upon, under the impression that the rights of the states had been abandoned, that the compromise could never be sanctioned by them, and that there could be no advantage in taking any further part in the proceedings. On the other hand, the most active friends of the Virginia model were equally dissatisfied, though for a directly opposite reason. Governor Randolph refused to affix his name to his own plan as amended, and Mr. Mad-

ison, its principal champion, although he consented to sign it, declared, and has recorded the opinion in his report of the debates, that he considered it as completely vitiated by the introduction of the equal vote of the states in the Senate, which would, as he thought, inevitably perpetuate in the new system the essential vices of the old confederacy.

But, though the prominent supporters of the Virginia scheme in the Convention were wholly discontented with the result, they were generally considered, by the people at large of all parties, as having substantially carried their point, and given to the general government a great increase of strength, as compared with that which it possessed under the confederacy. The experience of half a century has confirmed the correctness of this view of the subject. The equal vote of the states in the Senate has not thus far proved to be of any practical importance for the purpose which led to its introduction. All the struggles that have taken place in Congress, including even those in which the respective pretensions of the states and the general government were directly at issue, have been decided by comparison of the strength of great parties pervading the whole Union, as represented in both branches of Congress, and not by the votes of the states, as represented on a footing of equality in the Senate :

while the whole history of the country, before and since the adoption of the constitution, proves, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the power of the general government, under the present system, is much greater than it was under the confederacy. The difference is, in fact, nearly equivalent to that between a government sufficiently powerful for every desirable purpose, and no government at all.

In accordance with the impression which prevailed at the time, and has thus been confirmed by experience, respecting the substantial character of the plan proposed by the Convention, it received, in general, when submitted to the people, the support of those who favored the Virginia system, and the idea of strengthening the general government. Even the prominent champions of the Virginia scheme in the Convention, who had so strongly expressed their dissatisfaction with it as amended by that body, seem, on full consideration, to have taken a more favorable view of the result. Governor Randolph, who had refused to sign the plan as adopted, and Mr. Madison, who declared that he considered the original Virginia scheme as entirely vitiated by the amendments, were the two most active and prominent supporters of the constitution in the Virginia Convention. Even Hamilton, who had said, in the Federal Convention, that he thought both the plans proposed

entirely worthless from their inefficiency, and regarded the British constitution as the model of a good government, appeared in the New York State Convention as the leading champion of the plan, and labored, through the press, with his characteristic talent and energy, in concurrence with Madison and Jay, in recommending it to the people. On the other hand, the opposition to the plan in the State Conventions was generally led by the members of the General Convention, who had sustained in that body the pretensions of the states, and looked with apprehension to any decided augmentation of the power of the Union.

Patrick Henry, as was stated in the last chapter, had been appointed a delegate from Virginia to the General Convention, but, from prudential motives, had declined to accept the trust. He was, therefore, not personally committed to either of the parties which had been formed in that body; but there were several circumstances in his character and position, which naturally led him to sympathize in opinion and feeling with the partisans of the states. His native commonwealth was, at that time, by far the most important member of the Union. Any increase of the power of the general government, as compared with that of the states, operated, of course, more directly upon Virginia than upon any of her sisters. While several of the prominent Virginia

statesmen, such as Washington, Madison, Randolph, Marshall, and others, overcame, by considerations of a more general character, the force of this local feeling, it was not unnatural that others, and especially those whose political career had identified their personal importance very closely with that of their own state, should look at the whole question chiefly in reference to the manner in which it affected state interests, and, finding its operation in this respect unfavorable to Virginia, should, for this reason only, decide against it.

This was preëminently the case with Henry. He had been, through the most active period of his life, the most prominent citizen in the Old Dominion, had occupied her highest places of trust and honor, both civil and military, and had imparted to them, by his splendid eloquence, a consideration, which, as mere official employments, they would not otherwise have had. On the other hand, he had taken little or no part in the administration of the general government; had not particularly distinguished himself as a member of Congress, and had no reason to consider his personal importance or reputation as immediately involved in the turn that might be taken by the affairs of the Union.

It may be added, that, while he was thus naturally led, by his personal associations and pre-



vious career, to favor the importance of the states, rather than that of the general government, he was also strongly disposed, by his peculiar views, to look with disapprobation upon any attempt to enlarge, in any way, the attributes of government, whether state or general, at the expense of the rights of the people. He had professed, and acted on, through life, very often under difficult circumstances, and with painful sacrifices of personal comfort, the most decidedly republican principles of government, had constituted himself, in his own state, a sort of tribune of the people, and protector of their rights against the influence of a wealthy aristocracy, and was probably the most determined republican, as well as the most zealous state rights man, in the country. There was, therefore, in his case, a remarkable concurrence of all the circumstances, that could well be expected to operate in producing in the mind of any individual a disposition, independently of the actual merits of the case, to oppose the new plan. Those who reflect upon the immense influence of accidental circumstances on the will and judgment, who recollect how large a portion of their own opinions, on the most important subjects, have been mainly determined by causes substantially of this character, will not be surprised, however strong their conviction may be of the essential excellence of the federal constitution,

that a patriot so pure, intelligent, and sagacious, as Henry, should have been found, at the time of its adoption, among its most active opponents.

It is, therefore, unnecessary to suppose, as some have done, that Henry, and the other prominent opponents of the constitution, were actuated by personal or selfish motives. We may even go farther, and admit that there was not only great plausibility, but much actual truth, in some of their views. However beneficial may have been the operation of the federal constitution as a whole, it is not to be disguised, that, under some of its aspects, its tendency is different. This remark is made with particular allusion to the provision for the chief executive magistracy, which may, perhaps, be considered, with propriety, as the weak point in the constitution.

Our governments, both state and national, viewed under one of these aspects, belong to the class of elective monarchies; and, although the shortness of the term for which our rulers are elected, and the limited extent of the powers intrusted to them, abate very much the agitation naturally incident to this form of polity, experience has already shown that the difficulty is by no means entirely overcome. By throwing into the lottery of political life the glittering prize of the presidency, we have greatly augmented the intensity and eagerness of the struggle for official

distinction. If the constitution of the executive department in this particular form were indispensable to the successful action of the government, or attended with advantages sufficient to counterbalance the evils resulting from it, we should, of course, accept the latter with cheerfulness, as the natural price which we must pay for the former ; but this does not seem to be the case. The importance attached, in public opinion, to the office of president, is wholly disproportionate to the nature of the political functions connected with it, which are chiefly matters of mere routine.

The constant agitation, which is kept up throughout the country by the struggle for this office, and the great increase of intensity which it gives to party divisions, are, therefore, a clear injury, without any corresponding benefit. If the inconveniences, which we have thus far experienced, be the worst that are likely to result from the existing system, we might endure them with the less reluctance, since, considerable as they in fact are, they are yet trifling, when compared with the terrible oppressions incident to the differently constituted governments of the old world. But there is no small ground for apprehension, that, as the country advances in wealth and population, the inconveniences alluded to may assume a more malignant character than they have hitherto worn. If our institutions are destined,

as many suppose, to a premature and violent termination, it can hardly be doubted that the struggle for the presidency will be the immediate occasion of the convulsions by which it will be brought about. Without giving way to gloomy forebodings of contingent, perhaps, on the whole, improbable, results, and assuming that the good sense of the people will be competent to correct, by amendment of the constitution, any error that may become apparent, it is yet certain that, if the unfortunate result alluded to should happen, we shall have sacrificed the solidity and permanence of our government for a bawble of no essential value.

It is somewhat remarkable, that the inconveniences and dangers incident to the nature of elective monarchies, even in their most qualified and limited form, do not seem to have occurred to the minds of the members of the Federal Convention, while deliberating upon this part of the constitution. Their attention was so entirely absorbed by the question of the relative influence of the states in Congress, that they felt comparatively little interest in the executive department, and continued almost mechanically the form in use under the colonial system, without reflecting that the administration of a subject province under the orders of a metropolitan government, and the chief magistracy of an independent state,

are functions of an entirely different character, and should be provided for on directly opposite principles. The sagacious mind of Henry, pre-disposed, as it was, for the reasons above specified, to take an unfavorable view of the plan of the Convention, seized at once upon the weak point in the constitution as the principal object of attack.

The overwhelming power of the president, and its fatal influence upon the independence of the states and the liberty of the people, are the leading topics of his numerous and frequently powerful speeches in the Virginia Convention. There is, doubtless, some, perhaps we may say much, exaggeration in these views ; but the experience of half a century has tended, on the whole, to confirm rather than refute them. Of the parties that have subsequently been formed in the country, those which represent most directly the friends of the constitution at the period of the adoption, have not been, by any means, the least conspicuous in denouncing, as a great evil, the undue importance that is attributed, in our system, to the chief executive magistracy. It remains to be seen whether the evil can be cured by the quiet process of amendment, or whether, if it be too deeply implanted in this system to admit of that remedy, it will be kept hereafter, as it has hitherto been, in practical subordination



by the sounder and better parts of the system, or will finally assume new degrees of malignity, and exercise upon the whole form of the government the fatal and destructive influence, which the patriotic fears of Henry had led him to anticipate.

It will not be necessary, on the present occasion, to analyze accurately all the speeches made by Henry in the Virginia Convention. They are very numerous, and occupy no inconsiderable portion of the volume of debates. It may be proper, however, to cast a rapid glance over the course of the proceedings, and to indicate, briefly, the part taken by him on the different questions that successively came under discussion.

The Convention met at Richmond, on the 2d of June, 1788. From the great importance of the state of Virginia in the Union, and the care with which the members of the Convention had been selected, it was an assembly hardly less imposing than the Federal Convention itself. Eight states had already ratified the constitution. Five were yet to pass upon it. By the terms of the instrument, the consent of one more would make it binding on the ratifying states. It may well be doubted, however, whether, without the ratification of Virginia, it could have gone into successful operation. Independently of other considerations, Virginia was the residence of

Washington ; and there can be no question, that the anticipation of his election as the first president was an essential and indispensable requisite to the practical adoption of the constitution. The proceedings of the Virginia Convention were therefore watched with intense interest throughout the country, and the results of its deliberations looked for with extreme anxiety, both by the friends and enemies of the new system, as decisive on the main question by its ultimate adoption or rejection.

The Convention was organized by the election of Mr. Pendleton as chairman. On the 4th of June, the debate commenced ; as a preliminary step, a resolution had been passed that no question should be taken, upon any particular clause in the constitution, before the whole instrument had undergone a full discussion. From the 4th to the 13th of June, the debate was carried on upon the instrument at large. On the 15th, the consideration of the separate clauses began, and it was continued until the 24th. On the 25th, the general discussion was renewed ; and, on the 26th, it was closed by the adoption of the constitution. In the debate of the 25th, Henry had proposed a bill of rights and a series of amendments, the adoption of which by the other states was to be made a condition of the ratification of the constitution by Virginia. The

proposition, as made by him, was rejected, and the constitution adopted without condition ; but, immediately after the vote for the ratification, a committee was raised to report a bill of rights and a series of amendments, to be submitted to the other states in the form prescribed by the constitution. On the 27th, the committee reported the bill of rights and amendments proposed by Henry, and their report was accepted. This proceeding was the last act of the Convention.

The debates in this assembly were more fully and ably reported, than those of any of the other State Conventions, and fill an octavo volume of nearly five hundred closely-printed pages, a volume second only in value, for the student of constitutional law, to the inestimable report of the debates in the Federal Convention by Madison. The discussions of the first thirteen days are particularly interesting. They were managed chiefly by Nicholas, Pendleton, Randolph, Marshall, and Madison, in favor of the adoption, and by Henry, George Mason, Monroe, and Grayson, against it. All these persons were men of the highest order of talent, but the real champions and leaders of the two parties were Henry and Madison. No two men could be more unlike in their intellectual constitution, and each possessed qualities in which he was

decidedly superior to the other. Henry excelled his opponent, perhaps, in original power of mind, certainly in brilliancy of imagination, and splendor of natural eloquence. He had also the advantage that belongs to greater experience; the habit of success, and a name endeared to the people by association, with a long career of public service and the highest political and military employments. In calm good sense, instinctive sagacity, extent of information, and clearness of reasoning, he was surpassed by his comparatively youthful rival.

The qualities in which Henry excelled are undoubtedly those that are most likely to produce effect on a popular assembly. It is, therefore, highly creditable to the general intelligence of the Virginia Convention, that they manfully withstood his overwhelming eloquence, backed as it was by the almost irresistible charm attached to his name and character, and yielded their assent to the cool and clear logic of Madison. In accounting for this result, we must doubtless take into view the array of able coadjutors, by whom Madison was supported in the Convention, including even Marshall, who, though he said but little, whenever he did speak, always spoke to the point, with unrivalled power; the example of the other states, where the constitution had already been adopted; and, above all, the gen-

eral reverence for the character of Washington, who stood behind the curtain as a sort of guardian genius of the precious instrument that bore his signature, unseen, unheard, but exercising a moral power that was deeply felt by every one. But, after making all the necessary allowance for these circumstances, it cannot well be questioned that the influence of Madison, through his talents, character, and persevering exertions, was the immediate cause, in the Virginia Convention, as it had been before in the general one, of the adoption of the constitution. To him belongs the transcendent honor of having first supported, and subsequently sustained and carried through, by means of his own personal influence, at every subsequent stage of its progress, this great charter of our country's prosperity and freedom. We may search in vain the long rolls of history for a higher title to civil and political distinction.

A more particular, though, of course, very cursory, survey of the progress of the debate will show more distinctly how large and important was the part taken in it by the subject of our narrative. After the preliminary proceedings had been terminated, the debate was opened by Henry, who moved for "the reading of the act of Assembly appointing deputies to meet at Annapolis, to consult with those of other states on the situation of the commerce of the United States,



the act of Assembly appointing deputies to meet at Philadelphia to revise the articles of confederation, and other public papers relative thereto." The purpose of Henry, in making this motion, was, of course, to introduce the formidable, and certainly not entirely ill-founded objection, that the Federal Convention, in forming a new system, instead of merely revising the old one, had exceeded its powers. The idea was, however, not insisted on, and, after a few remarks by Mr. Pendleton in opposition to it, the motion of Henry was withdrawn. The facility with which this preliminary objection, perhaps the strongest of a positive kind that could be brought against the constitution, was yielded by its most determined and vigorous antagonist, shows already that the moral forces, which were operating indirectly in favor of it, had sapped the strength of opposition even before the debate commenced, and afforded a pregnant indication of the probable issue.

This difficulty having been overcome, the discussion commenced with a speech from Mr. Nicholas, in which he recapitulated, in a forcible manner, and somewhat at large, the principal arguments in favor of the adoption of the plan. He was followed by Henry in a short speech, in which, describing the proposition of the new plan to be, as it really was, a proposition to effect

a revolution in the general government, he calls upon its friends to show cause for so extraordinary a proceeding. The country is, to all outward appearance, tranquil and prosperous. In such a state of things, what reasonable motive can be alleged for proceeding to this desperate extremity, which, by general acknowledgment, can only be justified by the existence of misgovernment and oppression in their worst and most intolerable form? In the tenor of this inquiry we find a second evidence of the care with which Henry had surveyed the whole ground, and the skill with which he had selected the positions that he intended successively to occupy. The General Convention had exceeded its powers. This is the first objection, and is in the nature of a plea to the jurisdiction of the court at law. This being waived, a second objection, still preliminary, but of a more substantial character, presents itself. The country is tranquil and prosperous; the people are happy. Under such circumstances, it seems like political insanity to propose an entire revolution in the government.

The friends of the constitution did not meet these objections with any very precise or elaborate reply. They probably deemed it a more politic plan of campaign to reserve their main strength till the positive objections had been

stated, rather than to assume the burden of proof, and undertake to show by argument the necessity of a change. Governor Randolph made a short and not very powerful answer to the speech of Henry. He was followed by George Mason, in a speech against the plan, after which Mr. Madison made a very few remarks, which closed the proceedings of the first day of the debates. On the day following, the discussion was continued by Messrs. Pendleton and Lee, in reply to Henry ; but it was now apparent, that it was not the intention of the friends of the plan to meet the question upon this ground. Perceiving this, Henry proceeded to unmask his main battery, and occupied the rest of the second day by a long and powerful speech, in which he presented in detail the positive objections. It is, of course, impossible to state them fully in this connection, and the general outline of the argument is familiar to most readers of political history. The leading topics of the speech, as of all those which were made by Henry during the discussion, were the danger of consolidation, and the overwhelming power of the executive.

The speech is badly reported, and in two or three of the most important parts is avowedly imperfect. It probably gives a very inadequate representation of the language of the orator, to say nothing of his looks, tones, and gestures,

everything, in short, that is embraced under the significant and comprehensive term *action*. It contains, however, even in the shape in which we have it, many brilliant and powerful passages, one of them containing the celebrated and often quoted phrase, in which the speaker denounces the plan as deformed by "an awful squinting towards monarchy." It is easy to conceive, that, as delivered by the orator himself, it must have produced a prodigious effect upon the assembly.

The system of attack contemplated by the opponents of the plan was now fully developed. They had been compelled by the prudent management of its friends to assume the offensive, and leave to the latter the comparatively easy task of answering positive objections. It was now necessary to take the field in reply, in full force, under the direction of the ablest champions. The two following days, the 6th and 7th of June, were accordingly occupied by long and elaborate speeches from Randolph, Nicholas, Corbin, and Madison, in which they successively surveyed the whole ground taken by Henry, and presented, under every variety of form and color, the most plausible answers that could be made to his objections. At the close of the debate of the 7th, Henry commenced, and continued through the greater part of that of the 8th an-

other long and powerful speech in rejoinder ; and was again answered, at great length, on the same and the next following day, by Governor Randolph. After this the discussion was kept up with undaunted spirit, though in a somewhat less regular form, by the principal speakers on both sides, until the 15th, when it was at length brought to a close. The discussion of the separate articles, which occupied the interval between this date and the 23d, was necessarily of a more desultory character, and would not admit of a precise analysis. The debates on the judiciary, which occupied the 20th and 21st, were particularly interesting.

On the 24th, the general discussion was renewed, and Henry now made his final effort, founding his proposition of a ratification on the condition of the acceptance by the other states of a bill of rights and a series of amendments. At the close of this speech, a scene occurred which affords a good example of the manner in which the poetical element has blended itself with the simple truth in the accounts handed down to us of Henry's speeches and life. In the closing passages of his speech, while descanting on the immense importance of the question at issue, Henry appealed to the beings of a superior order, who might be supposed to survey, from their celestial abodes, with deep interest the



progress of a struggle involving the future fortunes of half mankind. "To those beings," says Mr. Wirt, on the authority of Judge Archibald Stuart, who was a member of the Convention, and present at the debate, "to those beings he had addressed an invocation with a most thrilling look and action, that made every nerve shudder with supernatural horror, when, lo! a storm at that instant arose, which shook the whole building, and the spirits whom he had called seemed to have come at his bidding. Nor did his eloquence or the storm immediately cease. Availing himself of the incident with a master's art, he seemed to mix in the fight of his ethereal auxiliaries, and, 'rising on the wings of the tempest, to seize upon the artillery of heaven, and direct its fiercest thunders against the heads of his adversaries.' The scene became insupportable, and the House rose without the formality of adjournment, the members rushing from their seats with precipitation and confusion."

The reporter presents the passage in the speech of Henry here alluded to in the following form :

"The honorable gentleman tells you of important blessings, which he imagines will result to us and to mankind in general from the adoption of this system. As for me, I can only see the awful immensity of the dangers with which it

is pregnant. I see it. I feel it. I see beings of a higher order anxious concerning our decision. I extend my view beyond the horizon that limits human vision, and behold those superior intelligences anticipating the political revolutions which in process of time may take place in America, and the consequent happiness or misery of mankind. I am led to believe that much of the account on one side or the other will depend on what we now decide. Our own happiness alone is not affected by the event. All nations are interested in the determination. We have it in our own power to secure the happiness of one half of the human race. Its adoption may involve the misery of the other hemisphere."

"Here," says the reporter, in a parenthesis, "a violent storm arose, which put the House in such disorder, that Mr. Henry was obliged to conclude."

Mr. Wirt remarks, in a note, that, "by comparing the statement of Judge Stuart with this passage in the printed debates, the reader may decide how far these may be relied on as specimens of Mr. Henry's eloquence." The passage as reported certainly carries internal evidence of being a very feeble and inadequate transcript of the orator's language; but we suspect that the reporter's parenthesis will be thought by most readers a much more natural and plausible ac-

count of the reasons and manner of adjournment, than the glowing statement of the learned judge.

The general discussion was continued on the 25th, and two or three new speakers took, for the first time, a prominent part in the debate; Colonel Innis, then attorney-general of the state, who seems to have been a very remarkable orator, and whose eloquence is characterized by Mr. Wirt, in his usual florid style, as a "splendid conflagration," Judge Tyler, and Zachariah Johnson. Randolph, Henry, Madison, Monroe, and Grayson, mingled, as usual, in the discussion. At the close of this day's debate, the question was taken, and on the two following days the proceedings of the Convention were brought, in the manner that has been already mentioned, to a close.

Although the views of Henry were not adopted by the Convention, he seems to have suffered no diminution of his personal influence in consequence of the part which he took on this occasion. At the session of the Assembly, which was held on the following October, he succeeded in preventing the election of Mr. Madison to the Senate of the United States, and in carrying that of Richard Henry Lee and Mr. Grayson, the latter of whom had been in the Convention an active opponent of the constitution. At the

same session, he moved a resolution requesting Congress to call another General Convention, for the purpose of amending the instrument as adopted. A motion was made to amend this resolution by substituting another, inviting Congress to propose to the states, in the constitutional way, the bill of rights and series of amendments proposed by Henry, and adopted at the Richmond Convention. This motion was rejected, and the original proposal of Henry was adopted by a triumphant majority of more than two to one.

Thus terminated the action of Henry upon the great reform effected in the government by the adoption of the federal constitution. While we render the fullest justice to the correctness of his intentions, and to the superiority of talent and eloquence with which he supported his views in the Convention, we may pronounce it, without hesitation, a most fortunate thing for the country that they did not prevail. Still more fortunate will it be, if the dangers which he apprehended shall prove, in the sequel, to have been imaginary, and not to have been adjourned for a time, only to burst upon us with greater fury in proportion to the immense augmentation, which will have taken place in the interval in the extent and population of the country. The enemies of liberal constitutions abroad generally look forward to the early occurrence among us of some such

catastrophe, and are sustained in their gloomy forebodings by the opinions of many of our most judicious and best informed citizens. Yet when we find the superior liberality of our institutions, accompanied, as it thus far has been, by a corresponding superiority in the intelligence, morality, and general well-being of the people, we may venture, perhaps, to regard such apprehensions as groundless, and to consider the establishment of our republican empire as the opening of a new and more auspicious chapter in the history of man.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*Retirement of Henry from political and professional Life. — Domestic Occupations. — Death and Character.*

THE proceedings detailed in the preceding chapter were the last, of a political character, in which Henry was engaged. It is understood, that, on the retirement of Mr. Jefferson from the office of Secretary of State, Henry was requested to take charge of that department of the government; and it is rumored, that, at a later period, during the administration of John Adams, he was



offered successively the appointments of Minister to France and to Spain. At the close of the year 1796, he was elected by the legislature Governor of the commonwealth, but declined the office.

He seems to have taken no very decided part in the political controversies that grew up after the adoption of the federal constitution, but favored alternately the views of one or the other party, according to his own private opinion of the merits of the particular question upon which they were for the time divided. He disapproved Mr. Jay's treaty with Great Britain; but, after it had been ratified by the Senate, and become constitutionally the law of the land, he deemed it the duty of every citizen to concur in carrying it into effect in his appropriate sphere of action, whether political or personal, and condemned the course of those members of the House of Representatives of the United States, who endeavored to prevent the appropriation necessary for this purpose. He also publicly expressed his approbation of the Alien and Sedition Laws, and his disapprobation of the celebrated Kentucky and Virginia resolutions. So strong was his apprehension of danger to the public tranquillity, from the policy which dictated these resolutions, that it induced him to break the determination, which he had previously formed, to

take no further part in the public affairs ; and, in the spring of the year 1799, he presented himself to the electors of Charlotte county, in which he resided, as a candidate for the State Assembly.

Although his avowed object, in seeking an election, was to oppose the views of a party which predominated throughout the State, his personal influence was so great that he was elected by his usual commanding majority. After his election was known, it was deemed by the republican leaders a matter of so much importance, that great exertions were made to bring into the Assembly their most distinguished advocates, for the purpose of neutralizing his influence. Giles, Taylor of Caroline, Nicholas, and a number of younger men, conspicuous for talent and eloquence, were deputed to the Assembly. Madison himself retired from Congress, and accepted a place in the Virginia legislature for the purpose of encountering the great champion on his own ground. Had Henry taken his seat, it would have been a singular spectacle to see these distinguished men leading on, as before, their respective parties, but each, so far as party connections were concerned, occupying a position directly opposite to that which he had held in the State Convention. The republican party had a large majority in the Assembly, and it is altogether probable that Henry would have found

it as difficult to stem the torrent of public opinion on this occasion, as he had on the preceding one ; but the point was never brought to a practical issue. A disease, under which he had been suffering for two years, came to a crisis about the time of his election to the Assembly, and terminated fatally on the 6th of June, 1799.

At the new session of the Assembly, a member of the federal party moved the following resolution ;

“The General Assembly of Virginia, as a testimonial of their veneration for the character of their late illustrious fellow-citizen, Patrick Henry, whose unrivalled eloquence and superior talents were, in times of peculiar peril and distress, so uniformly, so powerfully and successfully devoted to the cause of freedom and of his country ; and, in order to incite the present and future generations to an imitation of his virtues, and an emulation of his fame ;

“Resolve, That the Executive be authorized and requested to procure a marble bust of the said Patrick Henry, at the public expense, and to cause the same to be placed in one of the niches of the hall of the House of Delegates.”

The reception, which this motion met with in the Assembly, affords a striking proof how completely, at periods of high party excitement, a difference of opinion on the current questions

of the day is permitted to outweigh every consideration of a more general character. The mover of the resolution, as well as the illustrious subject of it, was regarded by the majority, not merely as an opponent, but as an apostate; and, although every member would have doubtless concurred in the view taken of Henry's general character, and in the propriety of the measure recommended, the action on the resolutions was determined by a strictly party vote. A member of the majority moved to lay it on the table. The member who offered it replied, with warmth, that, if it were so disposed of, he would never call it up again. The motion to lay on the table prevailed, and the resolution was, in consequence, never acted on.

The charge of apostasy is habitually made, in this and other countries, against all who take a course, in political or religious affairs, different from that pursued by a party with which they have habitually acted, and is generally intended to intimate a suspicion of corrupt or interested motives. In reality, a difference of this kind does not, in all cases, suppose even inconsistency in principle. The questions upon which parties are divided are continually changing; and, with the few who form opinions for themselves, it must be a matter of mere accident whether, in reasoning upon a new state of things, they come

to the same conclusions, which are drawn by others, with whom they had agreed before upon a different subject.

In the present case, it might, perhaps, have appeared more natural that Henry, who had opposed the federal constitution, as tending too strongly to concentrate power in the government, should have afterwards favored the strictest construction of that instrument; while, on the other hand, it may be thought singular that Madison, the great champion of a vigorous general government in the Federal and Virginia Conventions, should have insisted on the construction more favorable to state rights and individual liberty. But, after all, the questions of the Alien and Sedition Laws, and of our relations with France, which formed the principal topics of party controversy at this period, were essentially different from that of the adoption or rejection of the federal constitution; and it is quite unnecessary, and of course uncharitable and unjust, to suppose that either of the two great Virginia statesmen was governed, in the course he pursued, by any other than the purest and most patriotic motives.

This is now universally acknowledged in the case of Mr. Madison, whose name and memory are equally respected by all parties; and it is presumed, that the verdict of public opinion is



not less favorable in regard to Henry. In neither case could there be the slightest pretence for the imputation of interested views ; and both, in taking a course which necessarily exposed them to a good deal of temporary obloquy, evinced a moral courage in a high degree honorable to their general characters. In a letter to his daughter, Mrs. Aylett, written in 1796, Henry repels the idea of any change in his opinions, upon the leading principles of political philosophy, and gives his reasons, founded on the merits of the particular cases, for differing from his former associates upon the points then at issue. It is unnecessary, for the present purpose, to pursue the subject in any further detail.

After his retirement from political life, Henry continued for several years the practice of his laborious profession with undiminished reputation and success. In the class of cases which require or admit the dignity of eloquence, he stood, by general acknowledgment, at the head of the bar and though less familiar with the technical learning of the law than some others, yet, whenever the questions involved were of sufficient interest to engage his attention, he qualified himself for the occasion, and maintained his usual undisputed preëminence. The celebrated case of the British debts, which he argued twice for two or three days in succession, was, perhaps, the most im-

portant in which he was engaged. A report of his second argument is given, at great length, by Mr. Wirt, from the notes of Robertson, the reporter of the debates in the Virginia Convention ; and although, doubtless, (as every such report must necessarily be,) a very imperfect copy of the orator's language, conveys the impression of the highest order of forensic ability. In 1794, he finally retired from professional life, and, with the exception of the brief periods of political action already alluded to, passed his remaining years in the bosom of his family.

The steady pursuit of his profession, to which he had of late devoted himself, had supplied him with a competent fortune. By his two marriages he was the father of fifteen children, eleven of whom, with his second wife, were living at his death. He thus enjoyed the highest satisfaction that can belong to the declining period of life, in the society and affection of a numerous offspring. He retained, to the last, the cheerful and sportive temperament which formed, in youth, his most remarkable characteristic. He was frequently found by his visitors joining in the games of his little grandchildren, and entrancing them with the music of the same violin, which had so often in his early days seduced him from the graver occupations of the counting-room. His love of conversation and society had always been intense ;

and, being now relieved from care and business of every kind, he gave himself up without restraint to this cherished passion. He was always surrounded by a circle of family connections and neighbors, including a constant succession of strangers from other states and foreign countries, who were attracted, by his high reputation, to visit him at his residence. In the court before his door there was a large walnut-tree, under which he often passed his summer evenings and entertained his friends.

Imagination can present no brighter picture of a happy old age, than is exhibited in the real life of Henry ; and, when we compare this charming spectacle with that of the cares and privations which have clouded the closing years of some of our greatest revolutionary patriots, we are forced to acknowledge, that the strict private economy with which Henry has sometimes been reproached as a fault, when combined, as it was in his case, with a genial temperament and a liberal discharge of all the duties of life, was not so much a venial error as an actual, positive, and most important virtue. He had been always strongly impressed with the importance of religion, and had studied with care the best books on the subject that came within his reach. In the year 1790, he published, at his own expense, for gratuitous distribution among the people, an edition

of Soame Jenyns's View of the Internal Evidences of Christianity. Among his favorite works were Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, and Butler's Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed; a selection not less honorable to his literary taste, than to his religious character. In his last days, he dwelt with augmented interest on these great subjects.

To a friend, who visited him not long before his death, and found him engaged in reading the Bible, he remarked, "This is a book worth more than all the others that were ever printed. It is my misfortune not to have found time to read it with the proper attention and feeling till lately. I trust in the mercy of Heaven, that it is not yet too late." It appears, from the language used on this occasion, and from other circumstances, that he inclined to what is popularly called the Orthodox view of Christianity; but he was entirely free from sectarian dogmatism, and did not even connect himself in form with any denomination of Christians. He had probably reached, by the power of his own instinctive sagacity, that higher view towards which the public mind is now struggling, without having yet fully attained it, which regards the points that divide the different sects from each other as comparatively immaterial, and the essence of religion as residing in those that are common to them all.

In his person, Henry was tall and thin, with a slight stoop of the shoulders. His complexion was dark, and his face furrowed by deep lines of care and thought, which gave it a somewhat severe aspect. In his youth, he was rather inattentive to his dress; but in his later years, especially on public occasions, and while he occupied the executive chair, he paid, in this respect, a proper regard to the decorum required by his position in society. At the bar of the General Assembly he always appeared in a full suit of black cloth, or velvet, with a tie-wig dressed and powdered in the highest style of forensic fashion; and in the winter season he wore over his other apparel, in accordance with the usage of the time, an ample scarlet cloak. As he advanced in years, he also exchanged the rusticity of his youthful manners for a deportment distinguished by entire self-possession, and, on proper occasions, by an air of stateliness and elegance. He is represented, by those who have been present when he has entered the hall of the Assembly for the purpose of arguing some important case, as "saluting the House all round with a dignity, and even majesty, that would have done honor to the most polished courtier in Europe."

The leading traits in his intellectual and moral character have been often alluded to in the course of this narrative, and are shown too clearly



in his practical life to require an elaborate recapitulation. He possessed an instinctive sagacity, which supplied, to a great extent, the deficiencies of his education; a moral courage, which led him to spurn at all considerations of mere temporary expediency, when he was once satisfied where the right lay, and a naturally noble and generous heart. To these latter qualities he owed his extraordinary efficiency and success as a public speaker. Eloquence, no doubt, supposes, in general, the natural gift of an easy, copious, and flowing utterance; but this is not a rare endowment, and, when wholly or chiefly relied upon for effect, is apt to tire, rather than convince or delight an audience. It rises into eloquence only when it becomes the expression of powerful thought, and especially deep feeling.

While the speaker only gratifies the ear with melodious tones, and pleases the eye with graceful gestures, he is in some degree successful, but does not produce the highest possible effect. Nor does he reach the perfection of his art, when he merely succeeds in convincing the judgment by a train of sound or plausible reasoning. It is only when he acts upon the moral part of our nature, by stirring and successful appeals to the passions, that he kindles enthusiasm, and becomes for the moment a sort of divinity. The power of producing such effects, of making such appeals

with success, is itself, in a great measure, the result of a naturally keen sensibility, which is accordingly represented by the greatest critic of antiquity as the foundation of excellence in public speaking. *Pectus est quod facit disertum.* But even this essential requisite is not sufficient ; for the orator must not only move and melt, but, on proper occasions, alarm, terrify, and subjugate his hearers. In order to succeed in this, he must possess the moral courage, the undaunted self-possession, the overwhelming energy of character, which enables him to point the artillery of his eloquence at its object, under all circumstances, and without regard to personal consequences.

In the possession, in a much higher degree than others, of these transcendent moral qualifications for success in oratory, lay the secret of the supremacy of Henry over his distinguished contemporaries and rivals, some of whom, as, for instance, Richard Henry Lee, were much above him in literary accomplishments and external graces of manner. In this lay the peculiar *charm*, which, by general acknowledgment, hung upon his lips, as it does upon those of every truly eloquent speaker, and which the hearer can only feel without being able to describe. Description, in fact, embraces only such particulars as meet the eye and ear ; but the sympathy, which rouses and inflames the moral part of our nature, is a

kind of magnetic impulse, that passes from the heart of the speaker to that of his audience, eluding observation, and only recognized in its overwhelming results.

The language, which forms the medium for the transmission of this impulse, and which is identical in its essence with the highest poetry, transcends, of course, the talent of the ordinary reporter. It can never be reduced to a permanent form, excepting when the orator himself combines with the requisites of his own art the talent of a first-rate writer. To this rare combination of powers we owe the finished specimens, which have come down to us, of the eloquence of the two great orators of Greece and Rome. Chatham, the first of British speakers, either wanted the talent of writing, or did not exercise it in his own speeches; which correspond very imperfectly with the effects, that we know to have attended their delivery. Henry, like him, had never cultivated, and rarely exercised, the art of writing; the reports of his speeches, while they furnish an outline of the argument, convey no image of the glowing language in which it was clothed, still less of the moral inspiration that chiefly gave it effect. They fall, of course, far below his fame; and it is, after all, on the faith of mere tradition, attested, however, by facts too numerous and of too pub-

lic a character to leave it in any way doubtful, that the present and future generations will acknowledge the justice of his claim to the proud title, that has been given him, of the greatest orator of the New World.

NOTE,  
BY THE EDITOR.

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*Virginia Resolutions on the Stamp Act.*

[See p. 266.]

A COPY of these Resolutions was sent to the Ministry by Governor Fauquier. The following is an extract from his letter to the Lords of Trade, dated Williamsburg, June 5th, 1765.

“On Saturday, the 1st instant, I dissolved the Assembly, after passing all the bills, except one, which were ready for my assent. The four Resolutions, which I have now the honor to enclose to your Lordships, will show your Lordships the reason of my conduct, and, I hope, justify it. I will relate the whole proceeding to your Lordships in as concise a manner as I am able.

“On Wednesday, the 29th of May, just at the end of the session, when most of the members had left the town, there being but thirty-nine present, of one hundred and sixteen, of which the House of Burgesses now consists, a motion was made to take into consideration the Stamp Act, a copy of which had crept into the House; and in a committee of the



whole House five resolutions were proposed and agreed to, all by very small majorities. On Thursday, the 30th, they were reported and agreed to by the House, the number being as before in the committee; the greatest majority being twenty-two to seventeen; for the fifth resolution, twenty to nineteen only. On Friday, the 31st, there having happened a small alteration in the House, there was an attempt to strike all the Resolutions off the Journals. The fifth, which was thought the most offensive, was accordingly struck off; but it did not succeed as to the other four. I am informed the gentlemen had two more resolutions in their pocket, but finding the difficulty they had in carrying the fifth, which was by a single voice, and knowing them to be more virulent and inflammatory, they did not produce them.

“The most strenuous opposers of this rash heat were the late Speaker, the King’s Attorney, and Mr. Wythe; but they were overpowered by the young, hot, and giddy members. In the course of the debates, I have heard that very indecent language was used by a Mr. Henry, a young lawyer, who had not been above a month a member of the House, and who carried all the young members with him. So that I hope I am authorized at least in saying, that there is cause to doubt, whether this would have been the sense of the colony, if most of their representatives had done their duty by attending to the end of the session.”

Shortly after this letter arrived in London, the Rockingham ministry came into power, and Mr. Sec-

retary Conway wrote a mild and conciliatory reply, dated St. James's, September 14th.

"It is with great pleasure," he says, "I received his Majesty's commands to declare to you his gracious approbation of your conduct. His Majesty and his servants are satisfied, that the precipitate Resolutions you sent home did not take their rise from any remissness or inattention in you; nor is his Majesty at all inclined to suppose, that any instance of diffidence or dissatisfaction could be founded in the general inclination of his ancient and loyal colony of Virginia. The nature of the thing, and your representations, induce a persuasion that those ill-advised Resolutions owed their birth to the violence of some individuals, who, taking advantage of a thin Assembly, so far prevailed as to publish their own unformed opinions to the world as the sentiments of the colony.

"But his Majesty will not, by the prevalence of a few men at a certain moment, be persuaded to change the opinion or lessen the confidence he has always entertained of the colony of Virginia, which has always experienced the protection of the crown. His Majesty's servants, therefore, with entire reliance on your prudence, and on the virtue and wisdom of the colony intrusted to your care, persuade themselves, that, when a full Assembly shall calmly and maturely deliberate on these Resolutions, they will see and be themselves alarmed at the dangerous tendency and mischievous consequences, which they might be productive of, both to the mother country and to the colonies, which are the equal objects of his Majes-

ty's parental care, and whose mutual happiness and prosperity certainly require a confidential reliance of the colonies upon the mother country."

The above extracts explain the proceedings of the Assembly in passing the Resolutions, and the manner in which the British government thought proper to view them at the time.

A shade of mystery hangs over these Resolutions. All the accounts agree, that, when they went out to the world, they produced a very great excitement in the public mind, and had an extraordinary influence in prompting the subsequent movements. But when we now read them, as recorded by the pen of Mr. Henry himself, even including the fifth resolution, which was rejected by the Assembly, it is impossible to discover in what their exciting tendency consisted. The same sentiments, clothed in language as strong, had before been expressed by other assemblies and public bodies. Mr. Wirt has shown, from the printed Journals, that the first four Resolutions only were passed by the Virginia Assembly, and that the last two of these were considerably modified by amendments. Now, these four Resolutions, whether in their original or amended form, manly and bold as they are, contain nothing more than a declaration of sentiments, which had already been declared and published by other Assemblies.

The fifth resolution, which passed at first by a majority of one vote, and which, upon a reconsideration, was expunged from the Journals, is as follows;

"Resolved, therefore, That the General Assembly of this colony have the sole right and power to lay

taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatsoever, other than the General Assembly aforesaid, has a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American freedom."

If this resolution speaks in more pointed language than the others, it does not assume a higher tone than was manifested in the proceedings of some of the Assemblies the year before. The Massachusetts Assembly say, June 13th, 1764, in a letter to their agent in London, which was to be communicated to the Ministry, "The silence of the province should have been imputed to any cause, even to despair, rather than be construed into a tacit cession of their rights, or an acknowledgment of a right in the Parliament of Great Britain to impose duties and taxes upon a people, who are not represented in the House of Commons." And the New York Assembly, in their petition to the House of Commons in October of the same year, after claiming a freedom from Parliamentary taxation, "proceed to inform the Commons of Great Britain, that the people of this colony, inspired by the genius of their mother country, nobly disdain the thought of claiming that exemption as a privilege. They found it on a basis more honorable, solid, and stable; they challenge it, and glory in it, as their right." The letter and petition, from which these extracts are taken, were published. Other declarations, of a similar character, might be cited. What is there, even in Mr. Henry's fifth resolution, that shows a more determined spirit, or that was more likely to touch the popular feeling?



It is certain, nevertheless, that the Virginia Resolutions, as they came before the public, did produce a great excitement, and contributed in a remarkable degree to rouse the spirit of the people throughout the colonies. Governor Bernard says, in writing to the ministry from Boston, August 15th, 1765, "Two or three months ago I thought that this people would submit to the Stamp Act. Murmurs were indeed continually heard, but they seemed to be such as would die away. But the publishing of the Virginia Resolves proved an alarm-bell to the disaffected." And Hutchinson says, "These resolves were expressed in such terms, that many people, upon the first surprise, pronounced them treasonable." (Hist. of Massachusetts, Vol. III. p. 119.) Such an impression could not have been produced by Mr. Henry's five resolutions, as reported by himself, and much less so by the four actually adopted by the Assembly.

We must look farther, therefore, for an explanation. It would seem, that a spurious copy of these Resolves was first circulated in the newspapers, and afterwards printed in the "Prior Documents," Gordon's History of the Revolution, Ramsay's History, and Marshall's Life of Washington. In this copy, the third resolution, as passed by the Virginia Assembly, is wholly omitted; the fifth reported by Mr. Henry is essentially altered from his draft; and two additional ones are appended, of which no mention is made in Mr. Henry's remarks on the subject. They are as follow;

"Resolved, That his Majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this colony, are not bound to yield



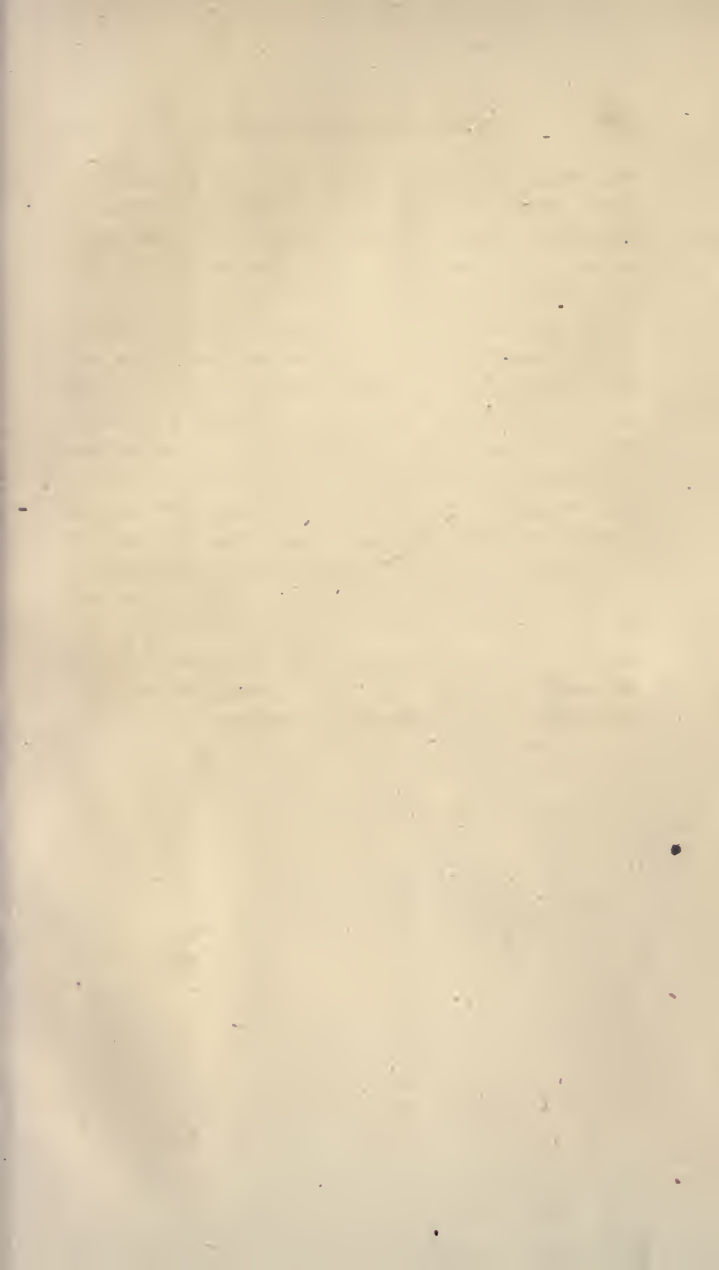
obedience to any law or ordinance whatsoever, designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws or ordinances of the General Assembly aforesaid.

“Resolved, That any person who shall, by speaking or writing, assert or maintain, that any person or persons, other than the General Assembly of this colony, have any right or power to impose or lay any taxation whatsoever on the people here, shall be deemed an enemy to his Majesty’s colony.”

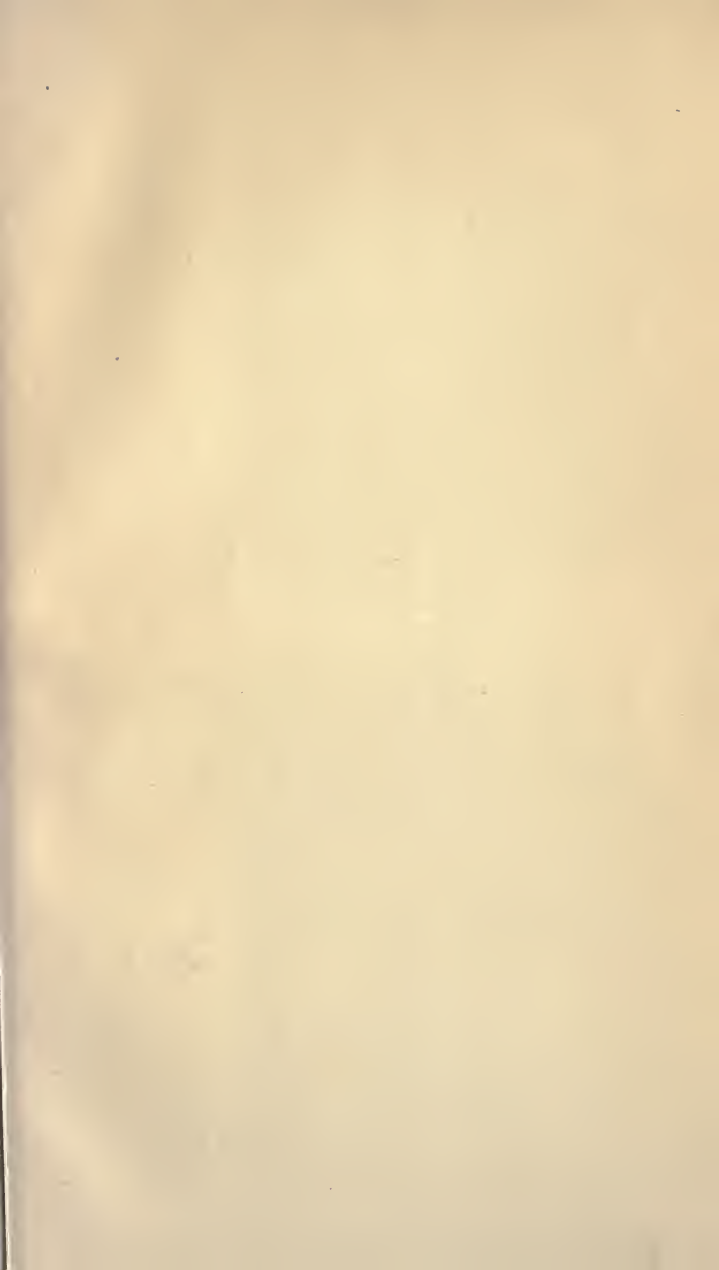
Gordon represents these two resolves as having been read in the Assembly. In the “Prior Documents” it is stated, that “they were not passed, but only drawn up by the committee.” They are doubtless the same alluded to by Governor Fauquier, as the two which “the gentlemen had in their pocket,” but which they did not produce, on account of the ill success of the fifth, “knowing them to be more virulent and inflammatory.” There is no evidence that they were written by Henry, or even that he had seen them. Yet these two Resolutions were sent abroad, not only as his composition, but as among those which had been adopted by the Virginia Assembly. This latter circumstance gave them a currency, and a weight, which produced the powerful influence on the public mind described by the writers of that period. The newspapers soon took up the vindication and defence of the Virginia Resolves. “The spirit discovered in them,” says Hutchinson, “was applauded as worthy of imitation, and the declaration in them, that *all who maintained the right of Parliament should be deemed enemies to the colo-*

ny, had a tendency to bring on those acts of violence, which soon after were committed in Boston." Hutchinson here obviously speaks of the last resolution, and apparently without knowing that it did not proceed from the Virginia Assembly.

We are hence led to the inference, that a spurious copy of the Virginia Resolves was at first put in circulation; that these were so well suited to the spirit of the time, that no attempts were made to correct the error; that three of these only were drafted and proposed by Patrick Henry; and that the two, which had emanated from a private and uncertain source, were chiefly instrumental in producing the marvellous effects so universally ascribed to them, and this because it was supposed they had been adopted by the Virginia Assembly, or at least approved by the distinguished patriots of the Old Dominion, which, as standing in the first rank among the colonies, justly exercised a commanding influence

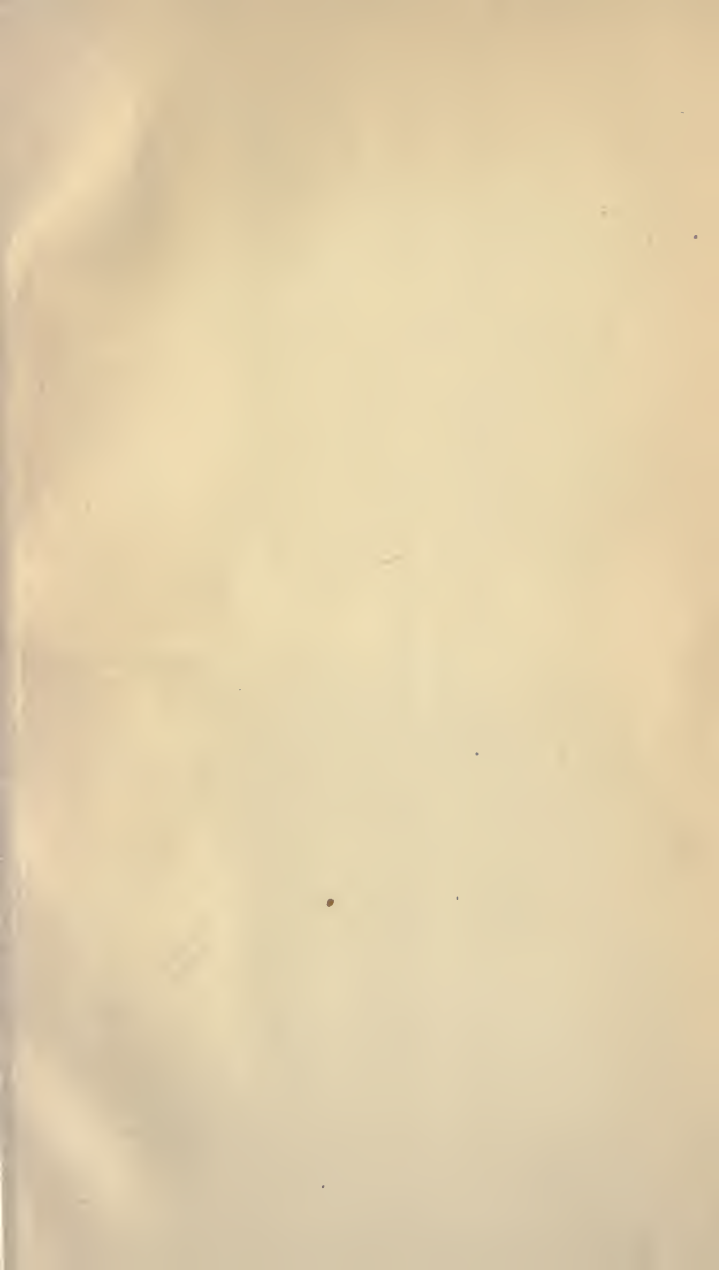




















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